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## FREDERICK THE GREAT



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FREDERICK THE GREAT ON HORSEBACK

*From an etching by Chodowiecki*

# FREDERICK THE GREAT

By WERNER HEGEMANN

*Translated from the German*

*by*

WINIFRED RAY

*Illustrated*

LONDON  
CONSTABLE & CO LTD

1929

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## AUTHOR'S FOREWORD TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

ENGLAND has produced the most elaborate eulogy of Prussia's Great King: Carlyle's six stout volumes on Frederick the Great. The influence of this English apotheosis of Prussianism has been far-reaching, especially in Germany, where the English eulogist found his prototypes and many successors. The present book opposes the overpowering and continuously increasing mass of literature in praise of the "Great King." Critics have called this book a "political pamphlet," in spite of the fact that all the statements contained in it are founded on the documents quoted. The author himself believes that all historical writings are political pamphlets.

The present book was originally a "pamphlet" written for a German public. If it had been written for an English public some omissions would have been inexcusable. The fact, for instance, that corporal punishment, which even Palmerston supported, was adhered to in the English army much longer than in the Prussian, would probably interest English readers. It might make them more favourably inclined towards the great Frederick, whose cruelty in flogging his soldiers is criticised in this volume.

As the book was originally written for German consumption it contains many statements unpleasant to Germans. The English public has good writers who do not hesitate to tell the truth about English conditions. It is of course an advantage if the critic attends to his own house-cleaning.

Whether Frederick II. was a great king, worthy of international admiration, as Carlyle and many non-Germans claim, or whether he was one of the most obnoxious figures in the history of the world, as the present volume claims, does not affect German politics alone. It is a question of international and of high moral significance. If my thesis that he was obnoxious is right, then the fact that he could be held up for a hundred and fifty years as the model for kings, seems to me a world tragedy.

W. H.



## PREFACE

We Germans, as a nation, have had small cause to feel grateful for this king ; not one indeed has caused us so great injury, not merely apparent but real injury.

ERNST MORITZ ARNDT, 1805 (concerning Frederick the Great).

Cromwell décapitait son Roi sur un échafaud . . . cruel envers son Roi il gouverna sagement sa nation.

FREDERICK THE GREAT, " De la littérature allemande, ses défauts qu'on peut lui reprocher . . . et par quels moyens on peut les corriger."

AMONG the Athenians and the Romans, the Swiss and the English, the French and the Americans, in the course of their struggle for popular liberty the murders of tyrants and the martyrdom of kings were necessary national episodes, the international influence of which is still potent. Frederick the Great spoke of " free " England ; he did not speak of " free " Prussia, but he declared shortly before his death, with an expression of disgust, that he was tired of ruling over slaves. Possibly every nation desirous of being termed " free " by " old Fritz " would need to sacrifice a king. Since the grandson of our greatest Frederick, the last Hohenstauffer died on the scaffold, and since Tell's assassin was filled with horror at the murder of a German emperor, the German people have seldom betrayed any inclination to slaughter tyrants and kings, whether by assassination or on the public scaffold. Perhaps every German (however hostile in theory to kingship, as, for instance, Fichte many times declared himself to be<sup>1</sup>) has at the bottom of his heart a feeling of kindness and gratitude towards the last William, because the unassuming exit of this monarch preserved the German people from the necessity of resorting to lynch law, the murder or execution of a tyrant, or any other of those unfortunate escapades, which in Germany are aspired to only by romantic brigands, hotheaded youths and criminals.

A king on the scaffold has since St. Helena become an absurdity, which at the present day would no longer contribute

<sup>1</sup> Fichte : " A prince should not exist," and " Duties of Princes ? Their first duty would be not to exist as such."



to the gratification even of puritan English roundheads or French marketwomen; and Germany lacks appreciation of that old Russian political adage which recommends "Despotism tempered by assassination," upon the principle maintained by Count Von der Pahlen, the murderer of Paul I., and later by Bismarck, that "if you want an omelette, you must be prepared to break the eggs."

The "Hohenzollern simplicity"—till then notorious only from hearsay—with which William II. abandoned his throne, is of a piece with the desire expressed in 1738 by the father of Frederick II. to retire to Holland—then a republic—he was full of enthusiasm for a republican constitution—and live there as a "free citizen." It is also of a piece with the proposal made by the Great Frederick in 1759 to retire into private life, instead of fulfilling those threats of suicide, with which he had bamboozled the more tenderhearted among his admirers. The Hohenzollern simplicity of 1918 was an open affront to the romantic lovers of fine gestures and bloody deeds, and the nation of poets and thinkers was to win its freedom (if it is true that political freedom must be purchased by the sacrifice of a king) by a royal sacrifice of a much more solemn and spiritual kind than the shedding of blood, the merit of which as a mode of royal sacrifice is from every point of view extremely doubtful. The degree of solemnity and simplicity with which the kings of 1918 renounced their thrones and their crowns is, however, of small interest, for behind these easily deposed monarchs, there stand—hard to depose, and in Germany perhaps indispensable—the great men who have coined that true royal dignity which nothing can destroy.

As the most recent and therefore the greatest among these really great men we cherish the memory of Frederick II. of Prussia. Kingship will survive among the German people, publicly or privily, so long as they retain their belief in their "great King," clear-sighted, sober, swift and accurate in his judgments, prompt and unerring in his deeds, an inspired man of action and a philosopher king, whom the pencil of Adolf Menzel has made more credible to us than the clumsy pen of the Prussian historian. In the illustrious philosopher of Sans-

souci there was realised more than the dream of a nation or a century. In him was realised one of the most sacred hopes of the millennia and of the world, that union of king and philosopher of which Plato dreamed and which the papacy failed to achieve. Frederick the Great, who rarely uttered truths without a touch of mockery, occasionally jested at the fact that he was not only king, but also supreme head of the church and pontiff of his provinces. So long as his Prussians believe him and his descendants or spiritual kinsmen to be worthy in the highest sense of this extensive power, the monarchy stands secure in the heart of Germany, even though the fatherland should suffer ruin in consequence. Other nations may have learnt to achieve political prosperity without a "great king"; we shall look for his return in the spirit with which Ferdinand Lassalle's Sickingen exclaimed to Von Hutten: "What we want is a great, united, powerful Germany . . . and, supported on the great necessity of the time, rooted in the depths of its soul, an evangelical head to preside as Emperor over that mighty realm." That was and is the aspiration not only of knights like Sickingen and democrats like Lassalle, but, openly or secretly, of numberless Germans. To-day, however, the fatherland threatens to collapse upon the heads of those who are cherishing this hope. Our ship is in danger; our ship must be saved. The crew is as though paralysed by its blind confidence in the pretended power of its lost captain, without whom it has no faith in its power to live or act. The supreme need is that the crew should quickly make up its mind whether that captain was really so admirable and indispensable, or whether he is not the cause of the danger to which the ship is exposed. The ship must be saved. If it is the spirit of Frederick II. that is to save it, nothing is more worth while than to investigate the source of this king's greatness and amazing power. The following "Six conversations concerning the royal sacrifice" are devoted to the study of that greatness. They are concerned not merely with the generalship of the great king, his diplomacy, his statesmanship and his administrative genius, but also with his services to German culture, his relations to the world's great men of letters and his important influence on German literature,

as well as his youthful relations with the female sex, his weariness of life in his riper years and his loneliness in his old age.

### PERSONALITY OF THE CRITIC

Manfred Maria Ellis, the protagonist of the following conversations, is one of the most remarkable men that I have encountered in the course of many travels over the five continents. I saw him for the first time in the year 1909, when I was a director of the Boston Exhibition of Town Planning, and had to deal with him as one of those who were financing this pioneer enterprise—he seemed at first glance hardly distinguishable from the other commercial magnates who were contributing towards the expenses of the Exhibition. Yet even the room in which he received me was out of the ordinary. He was seated in his office in the uppermost storey of the lofty building which at that time still bore the name of his father, who had died two years previously. This building appeared to be occupied from top to bottom with the business premises of the railway, land and mining companies which the indefatigable energy of Ellis's father had founded, amalgamated or controlled in various parts of the world. The serious position in which this labyrinth of foolhardy undertakings was found to be upon the death of Ellis senior, was no longer a secret at the time of my visit, and the skill with which the son succeeded in establishing order in his chaotic inheritance, and, after a few years of amazing industry, wresting from it a princely fortune, was a frequent subject of discussion among business men at our club luncheons, since Ellis junior—he was then thirty-eight years of age—had previously kept aloof from business and appeared to be wholly absorbed in his European interests. All kinds of wild rumours—which, as I learnt soon after on good authority, were not all exaggerated—were current regarding the nature of these interests and also regarding his father, a native of New York, and his mother, a member of an aristocratic Austrian family.

The co-operation of Manfred Ellis in the preparations for the town-planning exhibition promoted by himself and his friends, was of an entirely altruistic nature, and sprang from a lively

perception of the difficult tasks of the forty communes of greater Boston, the amalgamation and development of which it was designed to facilitate. As, in view of his all too numerous business engagements, every conversation had to be confined within the narrowest possible limits, Ellis suggested to me that we should have regular conversations at breakfast, and invited me to stay in his house as his guest during the remainder of the preparatory work for the Exhibition. As a result of this invitation, I lived for three months in close intercourse with this extraordinarily cultured and energetic man, and while he listened to my views on municipal architecture, I for my part learnt many things which assisted me later in the understanding of his views and his writings.

A biography of Ellis is in preparation elsewhere. Here I will only mention that his youth was spent on by no means American lines, since his mother—a great-great-grandchild of Charles Joseph de Ligne, who is several times referred to in the following discussions concerning Frederick II.—still retained her affection for her European home, even after she had left it for the New World. She frequently returned for a considerable time to her native country from New York, and later from Boston, and she succeeded in kindling in the heart of her only son, who accompanied her, an almost passionate devotion to European life, and above all to her German home, such as is by no means common in America. The young American soon felt almost as much at home in Austria as in Boston or New York. Encouraged by his cultured mother, he soon gained almost perfect mastery of the German and French languages as well as a very fair knowledge of Italian. He not only studied at an American University, but also attended a German Gymnasium for a year, and for four years studied at the Universities of Vienna and Paris. At an early age he got into touch with the leaders of European intellectual life; he travelled a great deal, and, up to the time of his father's death, devoted himself mainly to the study of history, art and letters and to his own literary labours.

In short, with good parts, abundant means and under unusually favourable circumstances, Manfred Ellis devoted himself to the acquirement of culture in the best sense of the word.

How far his endeavours may be pronounced successful, is a matter which no one who realises the difficulties arising out of the infinite complexity of our present-day intellectual life will venture to decide too hastily. One thing which specially impressed me in Ellis was his rare capacity for getting a mental grasp of the constant accretion of new material and appreciating its often surprising connexion with the long familiar.

Outwardly, discussions with Manfred Ellis nearly always took the same course: at the first broaching of a subject he seemed almost reticent, although he seldom displayed complete ignorance, and his memory and reading always showed themselves to be remarkable. If the question under discussion interested him, one could be sure that he would soon revert to it, after having meantime ransacked his mental armoury, so that when he took the field again, he was, as it were, equipped with new weapons. If the discussion was continued at a third and fourth meeting—and Ellis liked nothing better than to pursue his thought to its furthest limits—the result was frequently little short of amazing. On such occasions it often seemed as if Ellis must have spent the night rummaging among his reference books or through a whole library, and the way in which he would constantly throw new weights of argument into the shifting scales of the discussion, adduce fresh evidence, draw on new sources, produce the printed authority for his statements, thoughtfully reading relevant passages, or translating them extempore—all this might appear pedantic to less passionate seekers after truth, and even the most zealous students were frequently repelled by it.

One of his friends declared that Manfred Ellis reminded him of Tarleton, in Bernard Shaw's comedy, *Misalliance*, who diverts the audience by his inexhaustible store of quotations from all kinds of authors. And yet, if the reproach of dilettantism were to be levied against Manfred Ellis, it could only be on the ground that at the present day no man can hope to be ranked as other than an amateur if he is unwilling to confine himself to one special field of scholarship, in which those who hunger for ultimate truth often cannot see the wood for the trees.

In Europe few critics are inclined to do justice to Americans of the type of Manfred Ellis ; the presence or even the existence of such men arouses here the same doubt and astonishment as the fact discovered by Wilhelm Bode that the collecting-mania of American humanists in the New World had been the foundation of many of the most valuable and comprehensive treasure-houses of ancient art. And if any one doubts whether America has given birth to other sons comparable with Manfred Ellis, let him study the annals of some of the most distinguished families of New England or New York ; in the life-histories of the various members of the New England family, Adams, for example, he will find among the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of two presidents of the United States of America such amazing blends of business man and author, politician and philosopher, railway director and art critic, as should banish all doubt regarding the unlimited possibilities of such phenomena. Among the men whom I have in mind here a noteworthy example is Roosevelt's friend, Henry Adams, whose exhaustive studies of French Gothic and of natural science and whose own biography—especially the latter—are among the most noteworthy products of American intellectual life.

Ellis's habit, referred to above, of pursuing a discussion which interested him almost beyond the bounds of thought was only revealed to me in its full and astonishing extent when I visited him subsequently at his estates in Maine and South California, or when I encountered him as Herr Manfred—the name he travelled under—in Germany or France, where he generally had leisure and there was nothing to hamper his intellectual receptivity. When one Monday I expressed my surprise that he was able to bring forward so many new arguments that he had not mentioned on the previous Friday concerning a matter we were discussing, he answered me with a commercial metaphor: "When I have to accept payment in the form of shares in a company unknown to me, I have learnt to obtain information very rapidly regarding the nature and value of the enterprise. It can and must be done quickly, when it is an obvious, practical issue. Why should it be otherwise with problems less concerned with everyday life, but in themselves more important ? A true

nobleman should be equal to every demand. The Irishman who, when asked if he could play the fiddle, replied 'I don't know; I have never tried,' has always seemed to me an illustration of commendable simplicity. You probably know the satirical lines, once coined regarding the English First Lord of the Admiralty, Goschen, cousin of the German publisher, Goschen :

Mr. Goschen  
Has no notion  
Of the motion  
Of the ocean.

The English navy and the English world empire did not suffer from the fact that so-called laymen frequently occupied important positions, because these laymen were cultured in a higher sense than is realised in the non-English parts of the world. In order to be able to judge, one must be able to listen impartially and decide whose opinion is worth listening to ; and that is an art which I am above all intent upon acquiring. The mystery of my knowing more to-day than last Friday is easily explained. There is a good second-hand bookshop here. If I want to know more about a subject than is contained in my memory or my books, I ring up its remarkably well-informed owner on the telephone, in the confidence that, after the briefest hint at my requirements, two hours later his assistant will appear at my door with fifty to a hundred works from the estate of some collector, who has conveniently died a short time before, and appears to have devoted his life to the untiring investigation of the very problem which had just engaged my attention. Is there a single question over which some earnest worker has not toiled until he produced a book, a pamphlet, or a learned essay, or concerning which some indiscriminating enthusiast has not at some time collected valuable material ? I am almost ashamed of my insignificant labours, after the hard and often hollow nut has been cracked and all the pros and cons have been laboriously weighed by others. The jury listen for a few hours to the arguments, over which learned and experienced barristers have toiled for months or years, and promptly pronounce judgment with a mere yes or no. *Fiat*

*mundus, pereat justitia.* Justice may suffer, but that is the way of the world."

Manfred hardly exaggerated. His capacity for rapidly reading up and getting a grasp of a knotty subject exceeded anything I could have believed possible. Just as he talked with me about Goethe or Frederick II., so I heard him discussing with Americans doubtful points connected with the life of Washington or Walt Whitman, or with Englishmen some detail in the history of their country's constitution.

Even those who disapprove this manner of striding through the intellectual world in seven-league boots will doubtless appreciate the remarkable insight and concentration with which it is frequently accompanied. For instance, the manner in which Ellis, in the discussions regarding Frederick the Great, tried to justify Thomas Mann's theory of the political martyr, seemed to me like the childishness of the giant's daughter, who carried peasants, plough and team in her apron to her father, and wanted to place them on the table as a toy. It was worth while to have made the attempt, however one may approve the rebuff she encountered, which reminds one of Goethe's remark, when Matthison carelessly stuffed the iron figures of Frederick II. and Napoleon into his pocket: "We must be punctilious in our treatment of such heroes."

Those who object to the discussion with a foreigner of questions so intimately bound up with the political conditions of one's own fatherland fail to appreciate the manner in which Manfred Ellis would express enthusiasm or disapproval in regard to questions concerning Germany or America with equal impartiality. For that matter, I should be grateful to anyone who would tell me what one is to do, when a dear foreign friend, who has been one's companion through all kinds of trials and troubles, talks about German conditions just as frankly as he talks of the conditions of his own country. If this friend is cultured, remarkably well read and older than oneself, a conversation of this kind brings such instruction and inspiration as it would surely be foolish to reject on the ground of patriotic scruples. If this friend finally, like Manfred Ellis, is enthusiastic in his appreciation of the enormous importance of Goethe,



his conversation cannot but afford a German such satisfaction as must outweigh all less pleasing considerations.

What, however, does seem to me unforgivable, not in the American, Manfred, but in myself, is my incapacity to reply better than I did reply to his objections, particularly in the conversations regarding Frederick the Great; and I warn anyone who intends to go abroad that he may expect to encounter just such objections to certain aspects of the development of Germany as Manfred Ellis has expressed in the conversations reproduced here, and that he will find our so-called higher education an inadequate preparation for answering them satisfactorily. On the other hand, I believe that an impartial comparison of conflicting views is likely to have a very beneficial influence on the development of public opinion in the world at large.

Before I attempt to reproduce the conversations regarding the royal martyrdom, I should like to say a few more words concerning the quotations employed by Ellis. As regards the frequent allusions to all kinds of historical authors and sources, I had difficulty in finding a suitable means of expressing these in print. His manner of conversing is perhaps best described in the words of Ernst Moritz Arndt regarding von Stein, which Manfred himself quoted . . . "When the conversation turned on serious subjects, nay, when they were so much as referred to by a hint or a smile, Stein was always the prince. . . ." In putting together the following conversations, however, it seemed to me inadmissible to try to reproduce this "hint or smile." In conversation one can allow a sound scholar to make even what appear to be contradictory allusions to this or that source, without demanding that the actual text be produced in evidence. In a printed report, however, these passing allusions are apt to arouse a suspicion of untrustworthiness. In publishing the conversations, therefore, I thought it advisable to exaggerate somewhat the readiness with which Ellis would weave into his conversation verbal quotations from important printed sources, and I must insist here that he was not the scholastic pedant which my exaggeration may perhaps cause him to appear.

I must also here expressly defend Manfred Ellis from another suspicion which might be aroused in consequence of my inadequate powers of literary expression and the discretion which I had to observe in regard to the still surviving participants in the conversations. In the following discussions Ellis takes and keeps the floor much more often than he was wont to do in actuality. This is due to the fact that it is above all his ideas that I have tried to express and give prominence to here ; for this was the task I had set myself, after I had lived under one roof with Manfred Ellis on several occasions for a considerable period, and had become so familiar with his views that I could venture on the attempt to reproduce them. On the other hand, as regards the remarks of the other participants in the discussions, I have adopted the utmost reserve, and for the most part only reported so much as gave rise to Ellis's remarks. These other participants are in fact almost all famous masters of the pen, who have, since these conversations took place, submitted to the public their views upon the most important of the questions then discussed much more convincingly than I or any one else could hope to do, whereas Manfred Ellis's views have up to now received very little notice. I need hardly emphasise that I by no means approve all the opinions put forward by Manfred.

\* \* \* \* \*

The conversations took place in the year 1913 at the Villa Boccanera in Naples, whither Manfred and his family had retired after his return from his sojourn in the Pacific (Oconowoc, "Island of the Blessed"), in order to enjoy the neighbourhood of the great Benedetto Croce and the society of various old friends. The joys of distinguished companionship always had a specially strong attraction for Manfred Ellis, when he returned to Europe after a long period of studious retirement ; (he had on this occasion brought back from the South the manuscript of his book on Luther and other compositions). His financial circumstances were such as to allow him to exercise hospitality on a large scale, and since his friendships extended over many regions of the globe, the quarters in which he took up his residence were apt to become a meeting-place for

distinguished men of the most varied intellectual and national types. I can hardly remember having met in Manfred's house less than ten guests or less than five nationalities. Nowhere have I seen friends, who always met with a warm welcome, come and go with greater freedom.

Conversations in Manfred's house therefore were generally maintained at an amazingly high level and were unusually free from any provincial narrowness.

The notes of the conversations, extracts of which were published in 1924, were made by me at Manfred's request immediately after or sometimes even during the discussion. They express in general outline the theory which Manfred intended to expound in his essay, though unfortunately the latter never received the finishing touches required to make it a work of art. It is, alas! beyond my powers to convey the inexpressible charm of these discussions, in which, for all their wide range and apparent casualness, the aim was never lost sight of. It seemed better not to attempt to extract their substance from its natural setting in a chance conversation, and work it up into a systematic treatment of the subjects dealt with. Such an attempt would have given to my own exposition a prominence that belongs to Manfred's. The attempt to arrange the subjects of discussion under various chapter-headings will not be found very satisfactory, as in all the discussions similar ideas are dealt with, though from different points of view, and the questions in the first discussions are only answered in the last. The following pages contain only such extracts from the discussions as refer to Frederick the Great.

W. H.

BERLIN-NIKOLASSEF, *December 31, 1924.*

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*EXTRACTS FROM THE FIRST CONVERSATION*

THE ROYAL PHILOSOPHER





## EXTRACTS FROM THE FIRST CONVERSATION

ONE day in the early spring of 1913 I was working in an alcove at the side of Ellis's library, when Ellis, accompanied by a French guest, with whom he was in animated conversation, entered the room from the terrace, as though in search of a book, and without noticing my presence. The Frenchman was an officer of high rank, and from chance remarks I gathered that he was visiting Ellis in connection with the rather embittered negotiations at that time in progress between England and America concerning an important international question: namely, *whether America, in spite of the existing agreement to the contrary, could fortify the Panama Canal, to which end she had brought about a coup d'état in the republic of Colombia and had since 1903 expended over one-and-a-half milliard marks.* There were evidently in 1913 far-sighted Frenchmen who even at that time attached great importance to the future maintenance of good relations between England and America, while I had reason to believe that Ellis was exerting his influence on behalf of friendly relations between his country and Germany, and he often expressed his appreciation of the latter in almost exaggerated terms. The brief conversation which I involuntarily overheard, and from which, after listening almost dumbfounded for a short time, I made a noisy exit, was—I can remember it almost word for word—as follows:

The Frenchman: "I am convinced that you are mistaken as to the rôle which Germany is destined to play in the future history of Europe. I repeat, the greatest statesman that Germany has produced, your admired Frederick the Great, formed a far more correct estimate of this rôle by striving all his life for the destruction of the German imperial power. Frederick ranked Prussia, from the cultural standpoint, as merely a vassal

state of France, and held that the western portions of the German Empire, including Flanders, Alsace-Lorraine and the Prussian possessions in the West, should be handed over to their spiritual mother-country, France, the guardian of all continental civilisation."

Manfred Ellis, who, so far as I know, had up to that time devoted very little attention to Frederick the Great, laughed incredulously and exclaimed :

" But General, you have yet to give me proof of this amazing statement."

Meanwhile the disputants appeared to have arrived at the goal of their visit to the library. They stopped before the works of Frederick the Great. The Frenchman said : " Here you have the *Histoire de mon Temps* of Frederick the Great in the edition of 1746, Publication from the Prussian State Archives No. 4,206. Allow me to read you the following passage." And the Frenchman read the following words from the above-mentioned source : " You have only to take a map in your hand, in order to convince yourself that the natural frontiers of France extend to the Rhine, whose course appears to have been expressly designed to separate France from Germany, to mark their boundaries and to define the limits of their sovereignty." <sup>1</sup>

After the reading of these words, Manfred was silent, as though surprised or out of humour. The Frenchman continued : " Do not allow yourself to be misled by the reckless ambitions of the German nationalists of the last few decades. Germany's most prophetic statesman, the great pupil of Voltaire, perceived with the unerring vision of the true ' Realpolitiker,' the impossibility, the intrinsic futility of the dreams of a Central European world power and of a German imperial dignity. So it was and so it will remain. After the lifelong ambition of Frederick the Great, the abolition of the German imperial power, had been achieved, the aspirations of the Bismarck school can achieve no more than a temporary and pernicious relapse into a state of things that had been happily

<sup>1</sup> " Il n'y a qu'à prendre en main une carte géographique pour se convaincre que les bornes naturelles de cette monarchie semblent s'étendre jusqu'au Rhin, dont le cours paraît formé exprès pour séparer la France de l'Allemagne, marquer leurs limites et servir de terme à leur domination."

remedied. Prussia can never forget the historic rôle which her great king assigned to her in the struggle against the imperial ambitions of the central powers. This was how Frederick described his own activity: 'I am furnishing the French with information regarding the intentions of the Emperor, and I am urging France to mobilise the Turks against Austria.' Much to this effect did the great king write in his political testament of 1752, described by one of his warmest Prussian admirers as 'the most sublime among all the many manifestations of his genius.' Bismarck made a fatal error of judgment when he again stretched out his hands to Alsace-Lorraine, which had been secured to us French in 1744 by Frederick the Great's personal intervention. Bismarck trampled Frederick's testament under foot. For Germany any deviation from the Frederician principles must spell disaster. Only in the spirit of Frederick the Great can Germany exist."

Manfred was silent and thoughtful. Finally he answered: "The Prussian historian, Erich Marcks, who knew Bismarck, once said to me: 'I am not sure if I am right in thinking that some of Bismarck's references to the great king betrayed a certain aversion; in any case it is quite conceivable.'" (1)

Without venturing to give the name of the French guest, I may mention that he played a part of grave consequence to Germany in connection with the terms of the peace of 1918, and almost succeeded in realising the desire of Frederick the Great that the Rhine should be Germany's frontier to an extent beyond that which Frederick himself achieved. Manfred's remarks contained in the following six conversations seem to me largely a reaction, perhaps not unmingled with irritation, against the Frederician prophecy. Its proclamation from the mouth of a Frenchman had obviously surprised him, and had drawn his attention to a regrettable gap in his learning. In any case Ellis received next day from Detken and Rocholl's German bookshop in the Piazza del Plebiscito a large parcel of dust-laden printed matter concerning Frederick the Great. Some days later Ellis began to tease me with all kinds of revelations regarding my favourite hero.

"You are perhaps aware," said Manfred one day, "of the almost superstitious admiration which Bismarck's successes provoked in foreign countries when—as Nietzsche expressed it—'the error was circulated that German culture too had triumphed in that conflict, and must therefore be decked with the garlands appropriate to such extraordinary achievements.' At that time, for instance, the Japanese inclined to the assumption that Prussia was the first cultural power in the world, and they sent their boys to German schools and had recourse to Berlin not only for their doctors, but also for their architects and sculptors, with results which are evident in the streets of Tokyo to-day, and are so frightful that even the three hundred earthquakes that occur there every year have been powerless to obliterate them. As my mother was very anxious that I should be educated *not only in America but also in Europe*, my father, who was an enthusiastic admirer of *Realpolitik*, arranged that I should be sent for a time to a Prussian school. Consequently in the course of my varied education, I attended the highest class of a German state school in a small town and acquired the so-called leaving-certificate. A strange experience! Among the teachers there were some gifted and delightful men, some of whom have remained my valued friends down to the present time. But among my fellow-students there were few with whom I could feel any sympathy. A knowledge of the wonders of ancient and modern literature—the art of appreciation was, by the way, entirely neglected by the teachers—seemed to most of my schoolfellows either suspect or definitely repugnant, and in any case incompatible with their aim in life; even the most enlightened among them had no idea of any pleasure other than that afforded by beer-drinking and smoking, the service of Venus vulgaris and duels, which to me seemed utterly purposeless, because they did not, like the sword, the sabre and the foil, or any noble sport, develop the whole body, but only one arm."

I asked Ellis whether he thought that the intellectual atmosphere in American schools was really better than in the Prussian school which he had described. Ellis replied:

"I do indeed believe that the rather exaggerated addiction

to sport of American schoolboys, which our comic papers justly ridicule, does guard them against the excessive inertia to be found in many German schools, where the ideals of the pupils, and sometimes also of their teachers, seem to be derived from their book of drinking-songs. The obesity or biliousness, indeed the almost brutal appearance of the German student, as exhibited in the German comic papers, is to some extent a humorous exaggeration, but only to some extent. It is an almost invariable characteristic of a certain section of the German aristocracy. Only a few days ago, however, did I realise the profound historical significance of this fact, namely, when I found in the works of one of the most respected admirers and historians of Frederick the Great an almost exact description of the school I attended. This historian, I. D. E. Preuss, in the fifth book of his monumental work, *Frederick the Great*, published in 1833,<sup>1</sup> relates how the great king gave his special attention to the Joachimsthal Gymnasium, the aims of which he set higher and higher, until at length he could find no Prussian sufficiently enlightened for the realisation of his royal aspirations. As successor to the court chaplain, Sack, Frederick the Great, therefore, in the twenty-sixth year of his glorious reign, appointed the Swiss, Sulzer, inspector of the Gymnasium. Sulzer's proposals for reform were at that time approved by the zealous king, but he soon forgot them again. He was extraordinarily busy at that time with the building and furnishing of his great new palace, on which, according to Preuss,<sup>2</sup> he had before 1770 expended twenty-two million taler. So he allowed four years to pass before he appointed a rector for his favourite Gymnasium. As a consequence of this exercise of the rôle of father to his country, the Joachimsthal Gymnasium—which was in any case badly in need of reform—exhibited a state of things which an authority approved by Preuss as trustworthy, pronounced to be 'anarchy,' and described in the following terms:

"There prevailed at this period of the anarchy (1771-75) at the Joachimsthal Gymnasium a very rough and boastful tone. It was a regular thing to ill-treat newcomers in the most

<sup>1</sup> Vol. iii. 1. p. 119, Frederick as The Father of his Country.

<sup>2</sup> ii. 387.

brutal manner, to jeer at and publicly insult the inspectors, to hiss and shout at the teachers in the class-rooms and the dining-hall, and to consider the punishment of imprisonment and arrest as an honour. As regards their external appearance, the students wore long waxed topboots reaching above the knee, yellow leather breeches and large hats, the side-points of which almost touched the shoulders. The pupils in the lower classes had to put up with all kinds of things from their seniors, and the least attempt at resistance brought upon them physical ill-treatment. Foreigners, and in particular temporary students, were frequently subjected to insults and humiliations. It was quite an ordinary thing for large bands of the scholars to smoke tobacco in the evening (though this was forbidden by law), to drink beer to excess and sing coarse student-songs, and often to spend whole nights together playing at cards; several times indeed there were outbreaks of the most savage brutality. The Gymnasium students enjoyed the most evil reputation in the town.' "

After this description of the favourite school of Frederick the Great in the heyday of Frederick's rule Ellis continued: "Such things do not spring up or perish in one day. The times have become less brutal, but topboots and leather hose are even now the pride of German colour students, and in other respects I still find a strong resemblance between the spirit of the Prussian Gymnasium in the time of the great king and my own experiences in Prussia. It would indeed be surprising, if these students should ever develop an interest in political problems or in the liberty of learning."

I tried to divert Ellis's ridicule from this subject, which I had not heard him touch upon before, and asked again in what respect American conditions were different or better. He replied: "The American schoolboy is too one-sided in his aspiration for physical perfection. This dangerous aspiration, however, compels all its votaries to practise a certain degree of physical discipline, or at least teaches them to respect physical discipline. Even those pupils who are born intellectuals, and who with their teachers form a small but serious special group outside of the sport activities, derive some benefit from the

general appreciation of physical culture. Since the American schools turned their backs on the German University ideals and reverted to those of England, even the sons of our Western farmers sometimes dream at school of the young lord who combines physical with mental culture and who, even though he be not a Byron, at least aspires to some personal acquaintance with the intellectual giants of his age. In Germany, said Nietzsche (3), the aristocracy belong to the 'poor in spirit,' and have taken very little part in moulding the ideals of intellectual culture; the plebeian youth often never get beyond the crude peasant ideals of the ancient serf, and, even though they may like to make a boast of culture, are too easily content, as Goethe says, 'to thump the table amid singing and beer-drinking.'

. . . . .

Upon returning one morning from an ascent of Vesuvius, on the summit of which various subjects were discussed, I found myself alone with Manfred Ellis, and he reverted once more to a previous conversation, expressing himself very much as follows: "Socrates is reproached with having said to Xantippe: 'I am seeking the path to virtue, and you demand that I should supply you with housekeeping money.' To me it seems improbable, but Nietzsche apparently deduced from this that Socrates, whom he describes as the only married philosopher, was opposed to the marriage of philosophers, and himself only married with the ironical intention of demonstrating in his own person the proposition that 'a married philosopher is an absurdity.'

"Was the wish father to the thought in the case of the author of the *Genealogy of Morals*? Nietzsche (whom Shaw once accused of professorial foolishness) was himself a sick man, who could only preserve his exceedingly precarious bodily health by abstinence from many things which are not only not injurious to a healthy man but may even increase his vital energy. None the less it is incomprehensible that Nietzsche, the philosopher, who was well versed in Plato, should have put into the mouth of Socrates almost the opposite of what he actually said. Those who share Nietzsche's view of philosophers, namely, that 'this



intellectual type is fertile, but not in children,' can hardly cite Socrates in support of this ascetic fertility; for they will see from Plato's *Republic* that Socrates never proposed for a moment to encourage the contemptuous attitude towards marriage adopted by St. Paul.

"St. Paul—even the most excellent men are sometimes bad prophets—declared that God was preparing a day of wrath and that the end of the world was so near at hand that every man would do well to refrain from touching another woman. He was still prepared to allow marriage—even on the eve of the day of wrath!—but only as an expedient for avoiding harlotry. Truly, an amazing saint! Socrates was, as soon became evident, much better informed regarding the views of the deity, and therefore acquainted with the divine intention of allowing the world to continue in the old way down to the present time or perhaps even longer. Socrates was, moreover, a moral man, and he appreciated the significance of the relations between the sexes and of natural selection in the divine plans for the universe, a significance which only the deluded or the depraved fail to perceive. Socrates, therefore, concentrated his attention not on such deluded notions as hereditary sin and the wrath of God, but on the devising—as if such a thing could be devised!—of a reasonable organization of the state and—a simpler matter—on the begetting and education of men of high intellectual attainments, who should govern the new state. Think and act, act and think, as Goethe recommends in *Wilhelm Meister*.

"A man who can act and think and beget children is, according to Socrates, a philosopher—not in the present national sense of the term 'philosopher of Sans-souci,' but in the sense of the superman of Nietzsche, or rather of Goethe and of Shaw.

"The philosophers, says Socrates, should rule the state; at the present time one might say, the world. That the philosophers should have unrestricted liberty to marry and beget children seems to Socrates a very important means of multiplying the number of these supermen with a view to the salvation of the world. That is his notion of natural selection."

Hegemann: "In that case the alleged proposal of Prince Eugene to unite the budding philosopher of Sans-souci with

Maria Theresa, who was exceptionally gifted both mentally and physically, would have been much more in accordance with the teaching of Socrates and Plato than the Potsdam misogyny ? ”

Manfred seemed to ridicule this suggestion, and retorted : “ Socrates had too great a contempt for women to have bestowed much pains on their selection. And as regards Prince Eugene, and the relations of Frederick II. to women, that is a question which you as an ardent admirer of Frederick II. had perhaps better avoid. Frederick the Great often expressed his views on the subject of human natural selection, but I will not indulge in reflections concerning this remarkable prince in the presence of such a confirmed devotee.” When I expressed my eagerness to know more about Frederick the Great’s views on natural selection, Manfred vouchsafed some information which amazed me, and of which I have reproduced as much as may serve to introduce the subsequent conversations regarding that monarch. Among other things Manfred said :

“ Frederick II. often formulated eugenic rules, which would probably have pleased the philosopher Socrates. For instance, he said in 1770 to the Prince de Ligne : ‘ One ought to introduce some new blood into the ruling families of the kingdom ; their bastards are worth more than their legitimate offspring. I like love-children. Only think of the Marshal of Saxony or of my von Anhalts.’ ”

Hegemann : “ I thought Frederick the Great several times issued decrees prohibiting the plebeian unions of aristocratic officers ? ”

Manfred : “ Certainly ! But there are almost always two different Fredericks side by side, one of whom might be described as the voluntary disciple of Parisian philosophy and the other as the involuntary Prussian disciplinarian. Scratch off the Voltairian veneer from Frederick, and you will find the blustering Frederick William I. This ‘ motley composition of barbarity and humanity,’ as Lord Malmesbury called Frederick the Great from his own experience, explains the contradictory views expressed by Frederick on the subject of human natural selection. The best evidence that he liked love-children is furnished by the account of his sister, Wilhelmina, who, when he was only

sixteen years of age, bestowed on him two sweethearts out of the three hundred and fifty children whom she ascribes to the Marshal of Saxony. And the von Anhalt bastards extolled by Frederick were not only the children but also the grandchildren of love. Their mother was a minister's daughter. Their father was the grandson of the apothecary who 'polluted the princely Anhalt spice with dung,' to quote the words of Liselotte of the Palatinate,<sup>1</sup> who had stern notions on the question of legitimacy and was furious at the Anhalt *mésalliance*. I imagine that Frederick II. first read the letters of the envied Liselotte not when he had reached years of maturity but already when he was a young man. The young German-hating Frederick can hardly have sympathised with her haughty disapproval of the servile aping of French manners, but he appreciated her free religious views (which Voltaire's influence had made the mode in the time of Frederick II.) and also the passion for legitimacy which led her—the solitary representative of the Palatinate at the Paris Court—to declaim against 'that old harlot,' as she described the pious Madame de Maintenon, whom Louis XIV. had secretly married. Liselotte herself might have penned the almost incredible answer which Frederick II. gave to the apothecary's grandson and hereditary prince of Anhalt, when the latter wished to marry a girl belonging to the lower ranks of the aristocracy: 'Centuries cannot wash out such a stain on a ruling house.' While in the free England extolled by Frederick the nobility could 'introduce new blood into the race' without hindrance, Frederick II. wrote in reply to a request to sanction a misalliance: 'Ugh! How can he suggest such a thing!'; or he compared such a marriage with 'stinking fat and rancid butter' (4); but in his rôle of a Frenchman and a disciple of Voltaire he at the same time often mused upon the advisability of a mixture of blood strains.

"In his conversations with his intimate friend, the Marquis de Lucchesini, for example, Frederick suggested Cardinal Mazarin or a Swedish officer as the possible father of the much admired Louis XIV.; and since he is known to have frequently engaged in this kind of speculation, one may even credit Damp-

<sup>1</sup> Elisabeth Charlotte, Duchess of Orleans.

martin's story that Frederick attempted to introduce the requisite new blood into the house of Hohenzollern by arranging for a distinguished officer to substitute his detested nephew, the Crown Prince, in the bed of the first Crown Princess. As the Crown Princess was unpatriotic enough to object, and as Frederick the Great was nothing if not inconsistent, the statements of the Empress Catherine in this connection cannot be dismissed as incredible, although they were in part based on the insinuations of Frederick's rather malicious brother, Prince Henry. The following very outspoken statement by the Empress Catherine is taken from the *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte*, a compilation renowned for its Prussian hero-worship (and Manfred translated from this volume, which he had by him); 'When Frederick William, afterwards king, became Crown Prince of Prussia upon the death of his father in 1758, he had only one child, and that a daughter. Even this daughter he could hardly call his own; the Crown Princess herself called her Little Moller (Moller was a trumpeter in the Crown Prince's regiment). The Crown Princess (the first) could not endure her husband, and looked upon him, exactly as did Frederick II., as merely a clumsy and tedious fool. The Prince de Ligne called him Hercules' Club. . . . The first Crown Princess was said to be very lovable . . . the second was neither beautiful nor lovable nor witty; Frederick II. chose her for his nephew expressly in order to punish the latter for not being able to live on good terms with the first. Frederick said: 'A stupid man should have a stupid wife.'"

"Is it not remarkable," said Manfred when he had finished reading, "to hear the sage of Sans-souci philosophise so unso-cracratically on the subject of natural selection in the ruling house? Or at any rate is not the philosophic frankness of the conversations between the Empress Catherine and the brother of Frederick the Great to be admired?"

Hegemann: "I venture to question the truthfulness of these statements of the Empress Catherine. It would be too preposterous that Frederick, who is said to have suffered so greatly from his own loveless marriage, should have condemned his nephew to a like fate."

Manfred: "If it were preposterous, then it would be Frederician. But is it preposterous? 'A stupid man should have a stupid wife,' said Fredrick. But he did not consider himself stupid. In connection with his own betrothal in 1732, he objected above all—behind his father's back of course—to the stupidity of the bride selected by his father. Was she stupid or German? Gellert was her favourite poet. It was the stupidity of his bride (he would 'rather marry the greatest strumpet in Berlin than a pious woman'), which suggested to Fredrick one of the first of the numerous threats of suicide with which he liked to back up his assertions. On February 19, 1732, in connection with his betrothal, he wrote two very remarkable letters. In the first, he assured that redoubtable flogger, his father, of his 'most humble consent' to marry the bride selected by his parent. The father wept with joy, in the sentimental fashion said to be common with sadists. In the second letter (penned at the same time) the artful Frederick wrote to that influential minister, Grummkow: 'The King should consider that my marriage concerns myself and not him . . . but I know a way out; a pistol-shot will free me of my trouble and my life.' But Grummkow, who was to have run to the king in horror and persuaded that terrible man to change his mind, received the letter too late. So Frederick married; he did not shoot himself, and consequently was able later on to appreciate that there would be equally little danger in forcing an unloved and stupid wife on his nephew, the Crown Prince."

After a pause, Manfred continued thoughtfully: "These two artfully contradictory letters of February 19th, 1732, reveal very strikingly not only the broken heart of the much-flogged Crown Prince, but also the cunning, extolled by his admirers, with which he could up to his old age conduct important negotiations in the guise of a *trompeur et demi*." Thus in 1732 one has in a nutshell the hero of the Seven Years War, who negotiated at the same time with both parties and in addition threatened suicide, without causing alarm to any one.

"If Grummkow had not been so inconsiderate as to read Frederick's letter of consent to his happy father before he read the Crown Prince's threats of suicide, he would probably have

taken these threats seriously, and the cunning Frederick might have gained his object. Whether in 1757 the French took his threats of suicide seriously and therefore allowed him to win the battle of Rossbach is a matter regarding which the scholars are not agreed." I did not at that time understand this allusion, but Manfred reverted to it later in further detail. (5) At the moment my mind was preoccupied with the insult to Frederick the Great's nephew, and I asked whether Manfred knew anything about the upshot of the second marriage of the Crown Prince.

He answered me by another question :

"Would not Frederick, himself a very small man physically, have vouchsafed some appreciation of his enormously tall successor, if he had suspected how untiringly this stout nephew would, after his accession to the throne, strive to make up for the shortcomings of his great uncle and introduce the required new blood into the Prussian royal family? This German successor of the French Frederick II. is chiefly famous for his religious edict, which added to the difficulties of life for the bachelor philosopher, Kant, and by dint of which the King proposed to 'check the falsification of the fundamental truths of Christian belief and the resultant licentiousness of morals.' It has not yet been sufficiently appreciated that King Frederick William II. was perhaps a disciple of Socrates, and that he conformed to the teachings of this philosopher regarding fertility and the platonic state much more punctiliously than the undutiful, childless Kant, and indeed contracted some four or five marriages of one kind or the other. I have often marvelled at the modesty of Prussian historians, who extol the achievements of Louis XV., but pass over in silence the services of the most pious of the Hohenzollern kings.

"From a dramatic standpoint, moreover, his achievements were noteworthy. The remarkable complications which frequently resulted from the marital unions of the King of Prussia, which followed one another in rapid succession and were generally fruitful, would furnish precious material to the cinematographer, even though in the case of the 'much-loved' and much-wedded King of Prussia, the fashion of his love was less

distinguished and the worth of his devoted consorts less conspicuous than in the case of his French prototype, Louis XV. Justice should also be done to the sympathetic co-operation of the leading aristocratic families as well as of the ecclesiastical and judicial authorities in Berlin—who were so very much more obliging than those in Paris—in smoothing the way for their monarch's astonishing achievements. The lack of sympathy exhibited by the ecclesiastical authorities in France led to the great conflict waged with the Church by Louis XV. and Madame de Pompadour, a conflict which—unlike its modest counterpart staged by Prince Bismarck in Prussia—ended in the defeat of the Church. The rigid inflexibility and fanaticism of the Jesuits who were driven out of France in 1764 found a home in more tolerant Prussia, where they gradually acquired the power subsequently contested by Bismarck. In the Prussia of Frederick William II. the Higher Consistory gave its express sanction, supported by historical reference to Luther's sensible approval of bigamy, to the morganatic marriages of the King—at any rate when it was a case of unions with ladies of aristocratic birth. One of the King's plebeian consorts was so unsympathetic as to write to her mother: 'Could one conceive anything more foolish. . . . The Senior Court Chaplain performed the morganatic marriage in the Castle at Charlottenburg on Friday for a hundred gold pieces. Only imagine, dear Mother, this absurd mock marriage has even been sanctioned by a law, drafted in obedience to instructions. Everyone is laughing at it . . . but what will become of me?' She became Countess Lichtenau, but the morganatic marriage with her king, of which she showed so little appreciation, was denied her.

"By the by, I read somewhere not long ago that the word 'morganatic' has absolutely nothing to do either with *fata morgana* or with *morgenländisch*, but in spite of its romantic sound, is derived from the German *Morgengabe*, the morning-gift, which appears to have been seldom refused by the beautiful women to whom it was offered. How intimate is the connection between the morganatic marriage and the character of the German people, and how rightly therefore, the supremely German Martin Luther gave it his sanction, is clear among

other things from the fact that in mediæval Italy a morganatic marriage was also known as a marriage contracted in accordance with German law, because the nobility, who alone contracted morganatic marriages, were of German origin. It was therefore only just that the Prussian professors of jurisprudence should emulate the example of Luther, the Prussian clergy and the King, and introduce the morganatic marriage, the so-called marriage sinister, even for those not of royal birth, into the Frederician civil code; this institution was much admired by Count Mirabeau, when he was studying in Berlin, as was natural in view of the annoyance which he and his Sophie had suffered from the exaggerated moral austerity prevailing in France.

"All this shows," concluded Manfred, "that at the end of the eighteenth century, North German married life, under the guidance of the Prussian King, showed great promise of becoming a practical realisation of the Socratic doctrine of fertility. Yet the fact that all the difficulties had not yet been overcome was made clear to me yesterday by a friend, who raised serious objections to the last act of my comedy, *Iphigenia*, because in it Iphigenia becomes Thoas' morganatic wife. Incidentally he referred to the lamentable embarrassment of the lapdog, which the Duke Charles Augustus presented to his wife, to console her during his absence in Vienna at the famous dancing congress. In spite of very careful ducal instructions, the poor animal, when it arrived at Weimar, did not know whether to lie in the lap of the Duchess or that of Frau von Heygendorf, née Jagemann. That the mutual relations of a number of consorts call for a certain degree of tact was made clear to me by this critic of the morganatic Iphigenia. He insisted: 'The relation between Iphigenia and Thoas' legitimate wife is the most difficult point in your play, and you ought to have paid more attention to it!' I failed to convince him by citing Goethe's Stella and Cecilia, and Cecilia's 'We are thine!' 'Those are merely the phrases of a poet,' he said. 'What concerns us is the practicable feasibility. Hebbel rightly described Goethe's Stella as 'a thoroughly immoral creation,' and objected to the attempt to 'introduce all kinds



of sinful abominations into the institution of marriage." I replied that Hebbel had none the less praised Count von Gleichen, and had himself proved that one can have two wives and all live in harmony under one roof. 'A most regrettable and reprehensible exception!' exclaimed my monogamist in disgust. I related to him what a pleasant impression had been made upon me by my visit to a Mormon Colony in Mexico, where the various wives of one husband look after various estates and live very contentedly. 'Those are semi-barbaric conditions!' exclaimed my mentor. I reminded him of Louis XV., who often had himself shut in at night with two at the same time out of the five sisters with whom he was in love. 'They were depraved creatures,' exclaimed my judge. In vain I recounted to him how Frederick the Great wrote to one of the two sisters assuring her that 'Prussia's debt of gratitude for the lasting alliance which she helped to bring about between Frederick and Louis XV. was deeply engraven on his heart.' 'Diplomatic compliments,' exclaimed my executioner. 'That Frederick II. thought the idea of being king of France a most beautiful dream left him unmoved. 'That was in reference to Louis XIV. not Louis XV.' Nor did I mollify him by my account of the manner in which Louvois prepared for the visit of Louis XIV. to Dunkirk by writing to the Commandant of the town in the still extant order of the day: 'Prepare for Madame de Montespan the room marked "L" on the plan, and have a door made through to the King's apartments. 'The Duchess de la Vallière will have the room marked "V" on the plan, in which a door is to be made in the same way.' My censorious friend remarked: 'immoral French abuse of the royal power.' I invoked the memory of the great Maria Theresa who, as fully endowed with all the royal prerogatives as a queen-bee, bore sixteen children to her faithfully beloved Franz, and then after his death said between her tears to his sobbing mistress, the Princess von Auersperg: 'My dear Princess, we have suffered a great loss.' 'Viennese moral depravity,' said my indignant friend as he took his departure.

"Such people refuse to believe the great moral psychologist, Bernard Shaw, when he says that noble-minded women are

better content with a tenth of a man whom they hold to be of first-rate worth than with ten-tenths of a man of tenth-rate worth, and that often in fact more than ten women quarrel over a man of from first-rate to tenth-rate worth; and such people refuse to believe the great Socrates, who said that a man of first-rate worth is under an obligation not only to multiply himself by ten, but even by thirty and sixty!

"For, far from sharing Nietzsche's views regarding the injurious effects of cohabitation on philosophers, Socrates believed that the State would not be rid of its evils until it was governed in accordance with the tenets of the philosophers, and that, therefore, the philosophers must, between their thirtieth and fiftieth year, produce as many children as possible, and that they should be afforded 'more opportunities for conjugal delights than other men.'

"In order to secure them this extra allowance, the far-sighted Socrates suggests: 'Our rulers will obviously have to practise all kinds of tricks and subterfuges for the salvation of their subjects.' For instance if the women—like the statesmen in Athens—were distributed by a lottery, 'some cunning means would have to be contrived so that the man of less worth, when he seldom drew a woman, and then only one of the less desirable, would put the blame on chance and not on the ruling philosophers.' This absolutely sound plan Socrates hoped to consecrate by 'marriages of the most solemn description possible.'"

"Sentimental readers of the platonic writings have suggested that Socrates' plan of distributing women by lot is not in very good taste or is quite opposed to the most trustworthy experience of natural selection. As regards the good taste, I venture to plead on Socrates' behalf the verdict of the old bishop who was asked whether, judging by his long experience, marriages dictated by love or those dictated by reason were the happier. He answered: 'I cannot pronounce an opinion. If the names of all the marriageable girls were thrown into a sack like lottery-tickets, and every would-be husband picked one out with his eyes blindfolded, the result could not be more surprising than the incongruous results of the numberless marriages that I have

had occasion to observe. The result is frequently contrary to all expectations.' This is a truth, the recognition of which seems to be innate in the true philosopher; and I have often congratulated myself on not belonging to the philosophers, because among these victims to learning the faculty of conceiving a passion for every attractive woman is often developed to the exaggerated pre-eminence of that superman, Don Juan. It is in fact a characteristic virtue of great lovers and philosophers—as it is of God and of kings—that they are, so to speak, quite above parties where the heart is concerned. '*Summ cuique*' or 'to everyone her due' is the essence of the philosophic standpoint. The great scholastic philosopher, Duns Scotus, with his *potuit—decurit—fecit*, clearly recognized the divine nature of the deity, and therewith successfully decided the dispute regarding the immaculate conception in favour of Mary.

"Every philosopher seems bent on emulating the divine example. He knows that the greatest sin that an earthly woman can commit is: not to love; the philosopher—*potuit—decurit—fecit*!—he can preserve her from it! It is his duty to preserve her from it! And so he does! Moreover human natural selection seems thereby to profit in an amazing way; it is as though the primary forces of nature were still uncertain in what direction the human race should develop; they are still in the stage of experimenting; good philosophers are zealous in assisting, and the bulk of mankind follow their example.

"The most important marriage contracted within the last two hundred years was, I believe, the marriage of Goethe's parents; and I have never yet heard that it was a love-marriage in the romantic sense of the term."

Manfred was silent for a moment, as though he were reflecting on the fearful import of the opinion he had just expressed; then he continued:

"It was certainly not chance, but in accordance with a deep moral law and spiritual affinity that Goethe's mother cherished a particularly warm veneration for the great King of Prussia. In her wonderful letters to her son she wrote: 'The fact that

the King is to stay here for the fair . . . makes it a real festival for me and for the whole town, for in truth hardly another monarch can have been so beloved as the King is beloved by us all. When he goes away, I shall certainly cry for a week, and he will be remembered by us all our life long.”

I expressed my satisfaction at this sympathetic appreciation of Frederick the Great, and asked in what year his visit to Frankfort occurred. Over Manfred's face there passed an expression of impatient disappointment. He replied :

“ The letter is dated March 15th, 1793, and Frau Aja was of course speaking of the much-loved Frederick William II., to whom, therefore, Goethe's words : ‘ He who has contented the best of his age has lived for all ages ’ are truly applicable. For, if you except the Virgin Mary, is not Frau Goethe, in the eyes of a German, the best of all ages ? ”

I assented, at any rate so far as Frau Goethe and the Virgin Mary were concerned, and Manfred continued :

“ ‘ New blood must be introduced into the ruling families,’ ” said Frederick II., in a moment of inspiration.

“ Socrates prophesied that ‘ ridicule and shame would be heaped on his proposals ’ (which at the present day would be approved by many biologists). None the less the Socratic theory of philosophic natural selection was not put into practice even at Sans-souci, very much to the detriment of the country whose centre of government it was ; so that it would certainly have rejoiced Socrates to hear that in the nineteenth century the attempt was at length made in Utah—a considerably larger state than Prussia in the time of Frederick II.—to secure the victory of Greek wisdom. Listen to what I am going to tell you now ; it may sound amusing, but it is quite serious. In Utah, so it is recounted on good authority, the patriarch of the Mormons, the great ‘ philosopher ’ Smith, is said to have endeavoured, in the true Socratic sense, to combine a semblance of equal justice with a wise preference for the best. When the patriarch, as prophet and confessor, addressed the elect virgins of his community, he is said to have frequently conveyed to them the divine injunction that they should stroll slowly round the temple towards the left, and select the first man they en-

countered as a husband sent by God. And it is said to have happened almost invariably that the first man sent by God to meet the virgin was the patriarch himself, strolling round towards the right. I once made a journey by motor across the picturesque wastes of Nevada and Utah, and I then tried to obtain information on the spot regarding this propagation of the platonic doctrine. I was assured that the custom described was also in accordance with the teaching of Christ, as proclaimed by Him after his resurrection. Jest and earnest are near neighbours. There are grumblers who ask whether it was wise and right that the American nation should in 1862 have introduced federal legislation to prevent the further observance of the teaching of Socrates. Instead of relying on the 'propagation of the saints like sand on the seashore with a view to the extension of their sovereignty,' preached by Socrates, Jesus and Smith, my sparsely populated native land drew to itself immigrants from the countries of rulers, but, still more, from the countries of slaves. The first high-breed immigrants—British, Dutch, French, German—have been swallowed up by millions of far less civilised newcomers. It will be centuries before these motley crowds can develop into a people capable of culture. The long-cherished hopes of a democratic and enlightened future for America are seriously in danger of being trampled underfoot by the pressure of the mob. And since America, by the sheer weight of her size and wealth, is destined to rule the white world, the consequences may possibly be very serious. To whom, one might ask, has this huge sacrifice been made? To the morality of the New Testament, which proclaimed the approaching end of the world, and therefore despised the fertility of the patriarchs? To the morality which 'by moderation and abstinence' hopes to make world-history, but can barely heal the sick!

"It is to be feared that Socrates, if he should rise again and pay the American people the compliment of a visit, would, in view of his opinions on marriage, find his entry to the country barred, as recently happened to Maxim Gorky.

"Nietzsche's conviction that the greatest and most inspired artists refrain from cohabitation at times of mental pregnancy

and preparation is amusingly refuted by the shout, '*Une femme*,' with which Napoleon—Socrates deemed statesmanship the highest of the arts—is said to have sometimes interrupted his work, to resume it after a brief gratification. This is the same Napoleon in whom Goethe admires the 'repeated puberty of gifted natures'; the same Napoleon whose condition at times of mental exertion is illustrated by his own description: 'I am like a young woman in childbed.' Is it chance that Napoleon liked to ask: Are you married? How many children have you? And that he seems to have put these very questions to Goethe?

"Not perhaps by the sacrifice of sensuality, as unanimously enjoined by St. Paul, Leonore von Stein and Nietzsche as a necessary condition for high intellectual achievement, but rather by physical energy and satisfied sensuality, can the highest and most vital intellects achieve their greatest triumphs. And perhaps only he can with impunity touch the stars with the crown of his head, who can stand with feet firmly planted on the solid, sensual earth.

"Bismarck as a happy husband is a chapter in himself.

"The great Ariosto was a happy husband.

"Racine, the greatest of the French writers, a man of sublime intelligence, was a particularly happy husband. There is a delightful story how Racine, surrounded by his wife and children, was killing a large fish for their mid-day meal, when a royal messenger invited the poet to the table of Louis XIV. Racine could not tear himself away, and finally said to the courtier: 'Tell the King how you found us here together, and that my children would be disconsolate and would look upon me as a spoilsport, if I were to go away now. Please ask the King whether I may not come to-morrow instead.' Truly Nietzsche might object here that the beginning of Racine's married life—he married when he was thirty-eight years old—coincides in time with the beginning of his twelve years of sterility as a poet. To this it can be answered that Racine's silence was in no way due to his marriage, but was rather connected with that great and mysterious development in the life of the poet, which led him to renounce art after the failure of his *Phèdre*, and through

which he attained a deeper religion and the maturity of his genius. After his twelve years of silence this husband presented the world with two priceless tragedies, of which *Athalie* is, in the opinion of Voltaire, 'the supreme achievement of the human mind,' and therefore wrung from Frederick II. the statement that he would rather have composed *Athalie* than have won all the victories of the Seven Years' War. Only when *Athalie* met with as little appreciation as *Phèdre* did Racine relapse into silence for ever. 'There was no public who would understand and appreciate such things,' said Goethe in remarkably similar circumstances, when he had occasion to blame Weimar and Germany and extol Paris. 'If I had won success and appreciation, I could have written a good dozen pieces like *Iphigenia* and *Tasso*.' Why not? Titian and Beethoven created to order, and their creations were always first-rate. And Racine might have bestowed a number of sisters on *Athalie* and *Phèdre* if at this time, even in Paris, genius had not encountered a dull-witted hostility.

"Just as, with Racine, it was not marriage that was responsible for his silence, so Goethe's creative genius was paralysed neither by marriage nor by despair at the hopelessness of trying to build up a German theatre. In the choice of his wife Goethe did not show as good judgment as Racine. Unfortunately, nothing is more calculated to lead one astray in respect of Goethe's natural science, the worth of his previous lady-loves and even the worth of all the women of his acquaintance, than this mistake. There was something wrong somewhere when this supreme connoisseur in matters of the heart chose a woman who was not only not worthy but who even seems to have been a frequent source of annoyance to him.

"It is interesting to compare Goethe with Molière, also a philosopher, an artist and a supreme connoisseur of the affections, who, at the age of forty, married a young girl, and seems to have made an even worse mistake. If all the scandals which have been circulated regarding Molière's wife are true, the explanation of Molière's mistake is perhaps to be sought in his inferior social position. As an actor he was disqualified not only for a seat in the Academy, but also probably for the hand of a

number of women otherwise suited to him. Armande Béjart. . . ! Christiane Vulpius . . . ! Molière, the husband, tilts most valiantly for the laurel crown of the world's greatest comic dramatist, and the brows of Goethe, the most fascinating lover and husband that it is possible to conceive, are encircled with a halo of glory. Many give the supremacy to the Goethe of *Werther*, and of the first *Faust*, others, to the Goethe of *Tasso* and *Iphigenie*. One might perhaps guess the age of a man from his preference for certain works of Goethe. As a man of forty I find Goethe's highest flights of genius in his *Helena*, *Pandora*, *Divan*, and perhaps also in the *Theory of Colours*. The fire of these works of art is fed not by abstinence, but, on the contrary, by a gay and radiant sensuality, one might almost say domesticity.

"Intellectual power without sensuality seems to me like art without tradition, like social or political life without popular sympathy—something monstrous, still-born, something almost repulsive, like an artificially constructed language, a volapuk, instead of the ripened, living creature, whose presence is joy. Art and public life without tradition—impossible ! "

Manfred Ellis had talked himself into a state almost of excitement. Then he suddenly broke off, seized a manuscript volume inscribed "Correspondence of Frederick II. and Fredersdorf," and said in a changed tone: "Frederick II.'s note to his groom of the chambers, Fredersdorf: 'If he can bring a pretty strumpet with him, so much the better, for we need one,' which is ascribed by assiduous admirers of the king to the year 1754, may of course—if it is not merely a firmly established anecdote—be regarded as harmless boasting; or perhaps he was ill or wanted music. Ill? Yes, on December 6, 1745—thus some years before—he wrote to Fredersdorf from the second Silesian War: 'I lack sleep and appetite, and am like those pregnant women who have strange desires, but nothing helps me.' Or music? Yes, the great sage of Sans-souci, in his correspondence with his Minister (!), Fredersdorf, used to refer to the gifted female singers of his age—whom he often compelled to sing for him—as whores, not because he had done anything to justify the term—was he too courteous for that? or had he too much



respect for the hard-won distinctions of these artists?—but merely by way of expressing the nature of his royal devotion to art. Just as he wrote to his sister Wilhelmina on May 16, 1753: ‘I see that you mean to provide yourself with an author’; or to Fredersdorf at the end of August 1754: ‘In order to complete the troop, we need another three rascals’ (he meant another three actors); or to the same correspondent at the end of June 1754: ‘He is to buy me a young scamp with a beautiful voice in Rome.’ (He had a great appreciation of castrated singers.) It is clear that even at that date the Prussian sage had not yet investigated the limits separating venality, prostitution, art and rascality.

“When he was twenty-one years of age he wrote: ‘I love the female sex, but my love for it is rather fleeting. I want merely to have my enjoyment, and then I despise it.’

“But even in his early years he shunned whoring no less than such platonic fertility as would have enriched his people with new soldiers and thinkers. ‘The more I reflect upon it, the more I am in doubt what this King, who is after all ranked as a moralist, really wanted. The royal historiographer Preuss (6) relates that Frederick the Great distributed among his Guard so-called ‘Love-Permits,’ that is to say, ‘the permission for a soldier to live in irregular union with a woman whom he had got with child.’ On the other hand, the same Prussian historian relates that Frederick was so successful in preventing the marriage of his friends and soldiers that, for instance, ‘when his famous Bayreuth Dragoon regiment took the field in 1778’—again against the German Emperor—among all the seventy-four officers, there was not one married.”

Again Ellis broke off suddenly, and then concluded with the question: “Do you realise, moreover, that the ‘ex-Jesuit of Sans-souci’—so Frederick II. described himself on April 20, 1776—recommended Voltaire, then in his eighty-second year, to beget children? ‘That would be a good work.’ Such was the infinite sympathy and affability displayed by the royal philosopher towards the ‘patriarch,’ his senior by eighteen years, whom he often called ‘villain,’ but to whom he for a long time continued to pray each mornin’.”

Nothing occurred to my mind, and we said good night. Whither Ellis's thoughts were trending only became clear to me very gradually. His speculations were continued later, in the third conversation. Meanwhile there occurred the remarkable and fascinating discussion between Manfred and some of his American friends regarding King Oedipus and the sacrifice of his crown and his eyes, with which he sought to save his people from the consequences of the divine wrath. This discussion must be passed over here, and also the very searching discussion which Ellis had on one of the following days with various eminent German and French writers concerning Napoleon I. and Frederick II. These conversations concerning Oedipus and Napoleon are so lengthy that they would exceed the bounds of the present volume, and they must therefore appear as a separate publication. Here let it only be mentioned that a surprising kinship was discovered between Frederick II. and Napoleon; that Napoleon's relations to the female sex appear to have been "almost as brutal" as those of Frederick II., that both attempted to unite "French philosophy with the sword" (Taine); that the plans of both were frustrated, but that Napoleon's conduct was pronounced in many respects more noble, more hopeful and less destructive, in fact even constructive (this was Goethe's opinion also). Mention may also be made here of Bismarck's reference (13, iv. 1880) to Charles I. of England, "who perished with dignity on the scaffold . . . quite as honourable a death as on the field of battle"; in connection with which Ellis remarked: "It always seems to me bad taste, whether in time of peace or of war, to treat heads like finger-nails, to be chopped off according to need. After they have been cut off, heads often become all the more firmly seated. The English beheading has been avenged. The great Milton, who is perhaps not yet sufficiently honoured in Germany (instead of Frederick II.) as the intellectual father of Klopstock and therewith of modern German literature, had for a long time to devote his sublime poetic gifts entirely to the service of politics, and to write book after book to justify the execution of his king. His brilliant treatises on: *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, and *Pro Populo Anglicano*

*Defensio*, were replied to by the Royalists with their *Eikon Basilike*—the image of the king, to which Milton retorted with his *Eikonoklastes*. Had Milton written his political pamphlets ten years *before* the execution of his king, instead of afterwards, this clumsy royal martyrdom would perhaps never have become necessary. Yet the sound moral principles governing the home politics of 'free' England were later much admired—for instance, by Bismarck, by Ranke, and by the many statesmen who tried to copy English constitutional law. Anyone who shares this admiration will regret that Goethe, a poet fit to rank with Milton, in the years which he voluntarily sacrificed to politics, should have wasted his time on pettifogging trivialities, or unsuccessful adventures into greater politics, instead of, like Milton, laying down or upholding the basic political principles of his country."

Finally, reference should be made to Goethe's words, quoted by Ellis in the conversation regarding Oedipus: "That Oedipus should tear out his eyes is an act of stupidity and no cause for weeping; that Aristophanes should mock at mankind is a serious and not a laughing matter.

"Sophocles is ironical. . . . The so-called tragedy is in fact the true comedy and the so-called comedy the true tragedy, if one is to weep or laugh at anything."

GOETHE (to RIEHM).

*THE SECOND CONVERSATION*  
FREDERICK THE GREAT, LUCCHESINI  
AND GOETHE

Gehorchen ist mein Los, und nicht, zu denken !

Verleugnung fordert das Geschick von mir  
Die Krone kleidet den Gefangnen nicht :  
Ich nehme selbst von meinem Haupt die Zierde,  
Die für die Ewigkeit gegönnt mir schien.

Du nimmst dir selbst, was keiner nehmen konnte,  
Und was kein Gott zum zweiten Male gibt.

Wer weinte nicht, wenn das Unsterbliche  
Vor der Zerstörung selbst nicht sicher ist ?  
Geselle dich zu diesem Degen, der  
Dich leider nicht erwarb ; um ihn geschlungen,  
Ruhe, wie auf dem Sarg der Tapferen, auf  
Dem Grabe meines Glücks und meiner Hoffnung !

GOETHE (*Tasso*).



MANFRED generally breakfasted at half-past five, and then worked from six to seven in the garden or went for a walk and then boxed with a rubber ball. After that he retired to his study, unless conversation with his friends tempted him to linger. On the morning after the conversation regarding Oedipus, Manfred, returning from his morning walk, found me alone on the terrace, where in sight of the smoking Vesuvius, I was reading the letters written by Goethe from Italy to Frau von Stein. Manfred recognized the book, which had been taken from his own library, and called to me in greeting: "Please read aloud—one sentence right out of the place where you now are, and it shall stay with me the whole day."

### GOETHE WITHOUT AN INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL

I thought of the expression, "good moral digestion," with which Manfred had closed the discussion regarding Oedipus, and, making a rapid selection, I read the following passage:

"Naples, June 1st, 1787. The arrival of the Marquis Lucchesini delayed my departure for another few days; it has been a great pleasure to me to get to know him. He seems to me to be one of those men who have a good moral digestion, so that they can always partake with pleasure at the great world-table. One of our sort, on the contrary, is like a ruminating animal, which crams itself at intervals and is then incapable of absorbing anything more. . . ."

Manfred laughed: "Ha, ha, Lucchesini, the last bosom-friend of the malicious Frederick, hurries from the coffin of the Prussian disciple of Voltaire, in order to corrupt the virtuous German poet and pupil of Frau von Stein. Alack! that Goethe

should want to possess a good moral digestion, in order to be able always to partake with pleasure at the great world-table. That is just what his stern woman-friend could not forgive him."

Manfred asked for the book—it was the Julius Petersen edition—and read from the appendix the words, which the embittered Frau von Stein, in her drama *Dido*, puts into the mouth of the faithless poet: "... I had once in all seriousness climbed to the heights of virtue... but it did not suit my nature; I became so thin. Now, behold my double chin, my well-rounded paunch, my calves; listen, I will tell you a secret: Lofty sentiments thrive on an empty stomach."

Manfred laughed again: "Poor Frau von Stein! What a terrible self-revelation!"

He turned over the pages of the Correspondence, and then continued: "The Roman Elegies were perhaps in part composed immediately after the meeting with Lucchesini." And he again read aloud from Goethe's letters: "'I saw in him a true man of the world and saw clearly why I cannot be such.' That is pessimism, which soon after, in Rome, Goethe seriously tried to shake off."

"Goethe not a man of the world?" I asked incredulously, and thought of his Cologne album verse:

... with storm and fiery tread:  
Prophets to right, prophets to left,  
The world-child in the midst.

Manfred: "Oh yes, at that time! he thought then that he could perform all the labours of Hercules. But he soon discovered that even in Weimar the trees do not grow into the sky; he there gained a new conception of the man of the world, and afterwards in Rome he realised that this new goal of his ambition was far below what his best powers were capable of attaining. I should like to tell you an interesting fact which perhaps few have yet noted. Some years ago I had occasion to make extracts from the unpublished diaries of a Berlin courtier of the time of Frederick the Great (7). Would you believe it! This Count Lehnendorff sat next to Goethe at table during the latter's visit to Berlin!"

Hegemann : " Were there courtiers in Berlin at the time of Frederick the Great ? "

Manfred : " Why certainly ! What else was Lucchesini but a Berlin courtier ? Besides, do not forget, the philosopher of Sans-souci also had a wife ; and not only did the latter hold a court, but Prince Henry and his brothers also had a court, where Frederick came in for plenty of abuse. The heir to the throne, Frederick's nephew, was also at that time assiduous in his attentions to his own and other people's wives. Goethe came to this Berlin at the moment when Frederick II. was once again setting out on one of his civil wars, the ' potato war,' against the German Empire. In the company of the Duke of Weimar, Goethe dined with Prince Henry, and after dinner, while Goethe was writing to Frau von Stein, his neighbour at table was writing in his diary—in French, of course—the impression made upon him by Goethe, ' the famous creator of *Werther* and of *Götz von Berlichingen*.' I have the copy on my table ; I will read it to you. It is capital ! Capital ! "

Manfred led me to his study. From a mountain of volumes, which the sale of a scholar's library had brought into his house, he took one, and read out, rapidly translating : " ' He is a splendid young man, with something so lovable about him that he attracts everyone's good will. He has unquestionably great talent, and, in particular, he has that fine social tact which is so very pleasing. All our old generals like him, and so of course do all our young ladies. His appearance is very interesting, and he dances enchantingly.' And that is not enough. Here is another effusion provoked by a second meeting : ' I have never yet been acquainted with any young man in whom so many distinguished qualities were united. He combines the wisdom of a Nestor with the grace and charm of youth itself. He is a master in every sphere, and after he has expatiated on politics, on the art of war and on various abstract subjects, he plays blind man's buff and plays it better than anyone else.' "

Manfred gave me a radiant look ; I agreed : " Truly a masterly description ; Goethe as he looked and was ; it reminds me of Wieland's description of Goethe's first appearance at



Weimar. At the same time it furnishes the best of evidence that Goethe was a born man of the world ! ”

Manfred seemed delighted at the success of an innocent jest. “ Wait,” he exclaimed, “ I read to you by mistake not Count Lehnendorff’s opinion of Goethe, but the description given on the same page of the young Comte de Noailles, son of the Duc de Monchy and great-grandson of Louis XIV. and Madame de Montespan, who journeyed post-haste from France to Berlin, in order to march with the Prussian Army against Austria as a volunteer. You see, France, deep in debt and other tribulations as she was, had delayed to send the help which the Great Frederick had again entreated in 1778 for the struggle against the German Emperor ; but the young Comte de Noailles wanted to emulate his father and grandfather, the marshals, who had both already, as Frederick’s allies, fought for France against the Emperor (8). On the same page we find Lehnendorff’s description of Goethe, who was also a fellow-guest with the French Count at Prince Henry’s ; so that here is an opportunity of comparing the impression made that evening by the greatest German and a distinguished Frenchman. Lehnendorff speaks of the ‘ famous author of *Werther* and *Götz von Berlichingen*, whom the Duke has made privy councillor. ‘ The Duke is now his master, since he has supplanted the former controller of the royal household, Count Goertz.’ Count Goertz, remember, who was the original of Tasso’s enemy, Antonio, left Weimar, where Goethe ‘ supplanted ’ him, to enter the service of Frederick II., and played an important part in Frederick’s fresh machinations against the Emperor. ‘ This same Goertz, whom Wieland classed disdainfully among the rabble, admired Nicolai’s *Jays of the Young Werther*, and confessed that he would gladly have been its author ; further, after having won the favour of Frederick II. for his services in the negotiations over the Bavarian succession, he became, one might almost say, Goethe’s antagonist. Later on, after Goertz had rendered valuable service to his new master, Frederick II., and in fact helped him to checkmate Goethe’s ‘ League of Princes ’ project, he was appointed Prussian ambassador to the ‘ Semiramis of the North,’ at St. Petersburg, thus gaining admittance

to that larger world, into which Goethe had once in imagination followed enviously his friend, Merck."

Hegemann: "What do you mean by Goethe's 'League of Princes' project?"

Manfred, however, though later he replied to this question in detail (9), paid no attention to it at the moment, and continued:

"But listen to what Count Lehndorff has to say about Goethe:

" 'This Herr Goethe is my neighbour at table. I do my utmost to persuade him to talk, but he is very laconic. Obviously he deems himself too much of a grandseigneur to be valued any longer as a poet. That is a common fault in cultured Germans. As soon as they attain the position of a royal confidant, they become unbearably arrogant. Prince Henry asked Herr Goethe whether there were not some letters from the famous Bernhard von Weimar among the Weimar archives. The young Duke believed that there were some. This great scholar, however, knew nothing about the matter. This makes a very bad impression on me. It was one of the most glorious epochs in the history of the ducal house, and he ought certainly to have been familiar with it.' "

Manfred continued: "About the same time the Berlin poetess, Karschin, who was so despised by Frederick II. and on whom Goethe had bestowed a friendly visit, related to Gleim the impression made by Goethe on Berlin society: 'Goethe came one day to a concert at a Baron's, and there the whole company thought him very proud, because he did not deign to bow and kiss hands; it is said that the Emperor is going to make him a baron.' And on Count Lehndorff too Goethe made 'a very bad impression'! How it all fits in together! This comment of Goethe's neighbour at table should be set by the side of Goethe's letter to Frau von Stein written at the same time: 'I felt to-day, as I sat at the Prince's table, that I must write to you. How wonderful it all is; what a marvellous dispensation'; and so on in the Werther style. He was thinking of Charlotte von Stein, instead of chattering with the Count at his side or with the generals, 'of whom there were some half-

dozen.' The pride of having eaten in such company did not prevent Goethe from seeing through the Court society of Frederick the Great: I 'heard the great man discussed by his own rascallions.'"

I could not help laughing: "Rascallions! Truly Count Lehndorff did not deserve to sit next to Goethe."

Manfred: "Is it not laughable? The Count calls Goethe 'intolerably arrogant,' and Goethe calls his aristocratic companions 'rascallions' and declares: 'The ribald stupidity of a low pantomime is not more repulsive than this mixture of greatness, mediocrity and paltriness.'"

Hegemann: "Well, that serves them right!"

Manfred: "Whom? The poet and the courtier as well. Goethe would have liked to be both combined, and then proudly call himself a man of the world. When he wrote to Merck on August 5, 1778, after the Berlin journey: '... In Prussia I did not utter a word that could not have been put into print, and for that reason I was sometimes accused of pride, etc.'—he was perhaps describing not only the necessary consequence of the un-free atmosphere of Berlin (which he was careful not to visit a second time), and perhaps not only his anxiety lest his 'conspiracy' against Frederick II. should come to light in Berlin, and the same fate overtake him there as overtook the contemporary author of that witty lampoon, *Matinées du Roi de Prusse*, who was imprudent enough to set foot on Prussian territory, and had to spend the rest of his life musing on Frederician freedom of the Press in the fortress of Spandau (10). No, Goethe was bitterly conscious that there was some justice in the unfavourable opinion pronounced upon him by Count Lehndorff and others of his class. He even took seriously the reference to his ignorance of Bernhard von Weimar, and busied himself in the following year with preparations for a biography of that celebrity. Nothing is in fact more alien from Goethe's nature than to join with Frau von Stein in expressions of moral indignation at the 'ribaldries' of these human harlequinades. He would much rather be a man of the world with Lucchesini's 'healthy moral digestion,' and say, as he said in his letter to Frau von Stein of December 9, 1777 (Manfred read aloud):

'The quality of men is tested on me as on a touchstone—their kindness, indifference, spleen, coarseness, all serve me for diversion; *summa summarum* the greatest pretension of all is to have none.' "

Manfred continued: "We are to-day inclined to look upon Goethe above all as a poet and scholar, and to regard Weimar as his most fitting place of residence; Goethe himself was in 1786 by no means so convinced of this. And in 1823 (23, ix.) and 1827 (3, v.) he was still complaining bitterly how narrow a field compared, say, with Paris, Weimar afforded for the art of a poet and the culture of a man of the world. In Strassburg his teachers had recognised his gift for 'history, constitutional law and rhetoric,' and he had dreamt of a position in the 'German chancellery at Versailles.' He then repaired to the German capital, for such was Wetzlar, at any rate in law, at the time of Goethe. Since Goethe's stay in this imperial capital, the hearts of all sympathetic souls in the Roman Empire and the less illustrious remainder of the world have indeed yearned towards the city of Weither; but since from earliest times the greatness of a civilization has repeatedly been proportionate to the degree of its centralization in its greatest city, it is natural that men of distinguished talents should yearn for greater cities than Wetzlar or Weimar, in fact for the greatest cities in which their language is spoken. . . .

"What Goethe is to the Germans Voltaire was to France; Goethe calls him 'the greatest conceivable writer among the French,' and says of him: 'Practical and social life, politics, the acquiring of large possessions, relations with ruling princes, and the exploiting of these relations, so that he himself should share their power—all these things were the objects of Voltaire's aims and endeavours from his youth up. . . . Catherine the Great and Frederick the Great, Gustavus of Sweden, Christian of Denmark, Poniatowski of Poland, Henry of Prussia, Charles of Brunswick confessed themselves his vassals.' Voltaire was in fact the intellectual master of Europe; enough to inflame the emulation and ambition of a young poet, whose intellect was no less prodigious than that of Voltaire. Milton, Ariosto, Dante and Plato took an active interest in politics. I cannot

but think that Goethe, after his political defeat, must have felt a little like Tasso, when he laid his poet's crown by the side of the sword he had forfeited."

Hegemann: "You again refer to Goethe's political activity?" Manfred again seemed not to hear my question, and continued:

"What food for thought is furnished by the position occupied with Frederick II. by Count Goertz, of Weimar, and (until his death) by the Italian, Lucchesini! When Goethe, in his letter to Frau von Stein, admires the Marchese Lucchesini as a man of the world, and when he speaks of his own incapacity to be a man of the world, is it not rather as if he were saying: You did, it is true, utterly transform me in Weimar, but what you taught me has rendered me unfit for the diversions and the business of the great world? Goethe is not some impoverished nobleman, who has no higher ambition than that some princeling should select him for his companion and graciously raise him out of his penury. That Goethe's heart yearned for larger worlds than Weimar is proved by his happiness during his stay in the great cities of Rome and Naples. When Goethe wrote to Metternich, after the death of the deeply revered Empress Ludovica, which he never got over, he confessed that (like Leibniz, Gottsched, Wieland, Klopstock and Lessing before him), he looked with longing eyes towards Vienna, in the hope of 'employing there for lofty ends those gifts which nature and culture had bestowed upon me.' Upon receiving an invitation from Napoleon, Goethe discussed with Talma plans for a journey to Paris. But the Emperor, whom Goethe—after the fall of the Hapsburgs—called 'my Emperor,' was forced, thanks to Prussia, England and Russia, to abdicate his world-sovereignty, before he could greet his 'Monsieur Goeth' in the Tuileries. Weimar was by no means the ultimate goal of Goethe's ambitious desires. He would not indeed have thought it advisable to return to Berlin. Nevertheless, when Lucchesini wrote from the inmost sanctum of the 'giant' of Sausouci, Goethe may have turned longing eyes thither. Lucchesini could probably be more outspoken in his revelations concerning the great King, than could Antonio Goertz in the reports which he transmitted to little Weimar from the great

world of Berlin during the lifetime of Frederick II. As Goethe naturally made the visits to Lucchesini an opportunity for obtaining political information, the curious reference to the 'healthy moral digestion' of his host was no doubt to a large extent provoked by the fact that Lucchesini spoke of Prussian conditions with that same unconstraint which makes his diary such good reading to-day. Lucchesini, who seemed to the great King too good for an ambassador (11), had, under Frederick's less considerate successor, become Prussian ambassador, and was staying in Italy, in order to induce the papal state, which had been maintaining a discreet resistance since 1701, to recognise at length the Prussian monarchy (up to 1787 the Popes recognised only the margraves of Brandenburg). It was indeed important that the Vatican should bestir itself, if it was not to be too late, for Frederick predicted the extinction of the Prussian monarchy after his death; he did not guess that Bismarck would galvanize it into another brief period of existence (just as Bonaparte for a brief space kindled new and vigorous life in the declining monarchy of Louis XV. and Louis XVI.).

"Lucchesini can scarcely have spoken of the new-fledged Prussian Court in the style of Mirabeau; but when the succeeding and blatantly Teutonic government set itself in deliberate opposition to the French *régime* of Frederick II.—the French taxation system, the French theatre, French as the exclusive language of the Court were done away with by the new King; Germans were even admitted to the Prussian Academy after the death of Frederick II.; and for a time only Prince Henry still accepted presents of money from the Paris Court—Lucchesini possibly deemed it a not inappropriate moment to extract some details concerning the far-famed Frederician 'Caprices' from the material contained in his diary, of which up to 1885 the German public appears to have been in ignorance. That public, by the by, immediately gave evidence of a sufficiently 'good moral digestion' to enable it to digest the information without prejudice to the reputation of the sage of Sans-souci. '*Digérer avec la sagesse de Minerve*' runs one of the elegant phrases, invented by Frederick the

Great in that *dissertation sur la littérature allemande*, in which he furnished Goethe with instruction in good taste."

#### FROM FREDERICK'S CIRCLE OF THE INITIATED

I confessed that I was not yet acquainted with Lucchesini's diary. Manfred exclaimed in astonishment: "You will not regret reading it, even if you only venture on the 'Selection from a critical standpoint in German translation,' which was published by Dr. Fritz Bischoff, together with the memoirs of Frederick's reader, de Catt, in 1885. It contains even less flattering disclosures regarding Frederick II. than the much-abused memoirs of Voltaire. It also contains a remarkable preface by the editor; in it he says:

" 'Of distinguished birth, the young Lucchesini (1751-1825)'—thus two years younger than Goethe—'who was introduced to the King in 1779 on a journey through France and Germany, could claim a different reception from the son of a Swiss merchant' (this refers to de Catt, Lucchesini's predecessor). This apostle of Frederick II. had a sympathy for the younger generation (unless it made the mistake of being of German origin), but he never entirely rid himself of aristocratic prejudices. Doctor Bischoff continues: 'Lucchesini at once had an entry to the court; he received the chamberlain's gold key'—that 'bauble' over the loss of which Voltaire is said to have sulked—'and, more fortunate than de Catt, found his place at the same round table at Sans-souci at which Voltaire had sat thirty years previously, and the magic of which he could never forget. We have to thank the Marchese for the only notes of the conversations of this circle which appear to have come down to posterity'—Frederick's historian, Preuss, called it 'the narrow circle of the initiated.' (12) Doctor Bischoff continues: 'Lucchesini faithfully noted down what he heard, . . . If some of the facts communicated to his companions had become displaced and confused in the memory of the aged King, the reporter is not responsible for that; the notes in his diary are nothing else than the faithful echo of the utterances of the King.' "

"This is in fact what makes many of Lucchesini's memoranda so valuable; they do not show things as they were, but as they appeared to the great King in his 'circle of the initiated'! And the editor assures us: 'Never did anything commonplace issue from his lips; he ennobles everything.'—This was also said of Frederick by the witty Prince de Ligne, who, together with Lucchesini, partook of a midday meal at Sans-souci, at which the King surpassed himself."

"When one reads these 'cnnobling' utterances noted down by Lucchesini, and when one calls to mind that vanity and thirst for approbation which, to quote Bismarck's phrase, weighed on Frederick II. like a mortgage, it soon becomes clear how Lucchesini succeeded in winning the favour of the King so rapidly and securely; he appears, at any rate at first, to have genuinely admired the royal compositions which—certainly no small honour—were read to him almost daily, and he seems to have known how to give warm expression to his admiration. There occur several passages like the following:

"'November 10th, 1780. Evening. I heard the King read a paper—pure and unalloyed gold' or: 'March 27th, 1781. Evening. Before dinner I heard him read a letter to the Princess Amelia, "On Chance," composed after the treaty of Kloster-Zeven and before the battle of Rossbach. It contains splendid passages of fine philosophy, poetic thoughts in abundance and verses of which the most distinguished poet would not need to be ashamed.' This poem runs to over twenty printed pages. As a reward for the fact that the young listener despite of this—and moreover on an empty stomach—was able to express appreciation, he seems soon to have been allotted the honourable task of collaboration, which had been performed by de Catt before him, and, still earlier, by the ungrateful Voltaire, who compared it with the washing of dirty linen. Voltaire's remuneration was 5000 thaler with board and lodging. To the less renowned Lucchesini Frederick II. paid a salary of only 2000 thaler, after he had previously dismissed Winckelmann, who demanded the same sum, with the remark: 'For a German, 1000 thaler is enough.'

"The discriminating collaboration of Lucchesini is proved



by the following passages from his diary. He writes of Frederick II.: 'March 19th, 1781. Evening. He read to me an "Epistle on Malice," which he composed in the year 1762 and has now improved; it is indeed beautiful.'—'March 20th, 1781. Evening. Reading of the same revised epistle. It is beautiful, indeed very beautiful.'—'March 24th, 1781. In the evening I listened to the whole of the revised epistle "On Malice." It is really beautiful and perhaps deserves preference over all the others.' Lucchesini's crescendo is convincing: beautiful! very beautiful, really beautiful!

"That the judgment of Lucchesini, like that of Frederick, was duly coloured by the views of Voltaire, is clear from the following passage: 'October 31st, 1780. In the evening a long sitting. Reading of the first part of a new essay. Reading of two songs from the poem on the Confederation. New, graceful, diverting thoughts are present in infinite abundance; the beginnings and endings of the songs are specially beautiful. The style is sometimes careless; but at every moment one meets with individual verses, whole pages, hundreds of lines, which are worthy of a great poet. And through the whole there rings a certain Attic laughter, a certain festal mood, a certain grace, which makes it far beyond all comparison. Criticism of religion is not absent. Rome is the temple of folly; her altar is in the Vatican, the Pope is her high-priest.' This 'Attic laughter' is interesting. Modern Prussian historians would also gladly ascribe it to their great King, because they abhor the truth that it is a mere echo of the laughter of the King's teacher, Voltaire. How little Frederick II.'s laughter has to do with Attica is clear from the following notes of Lucchesini: 'April 7th, 1781. The King read Aristophanes, but thinks him tedious, because the Greek and Latin comedies have no inner cohesion, and one is forced to swallow down a whole mass of mediocre stuff in order to arrive at any beauty,' Or: 'September 6th, 1783. The King does not care for Plato, and cannot forgive Cicero for having been so infatuated with him.'

"Frederick's admiration for Cicero went, as we know, so far that he not only placed him above Plato, but even, on account

of his many-sidedness, compared him with the divine Voltaire himself. Frederick's admiration for Cicero appears to have been shared by Lucchesini: on September 7th, 1783, he writes: 'The King made a very eloquent speech in order to persuade Count Pinto to be reconciled with his nephew. It contains passages which would be quite worthy of Cicero. Pinto's obstinacy, however, was even greater than the King's eloquence.'

"Count Pinto, also an Italian, is another of the listeners with whom Frederick II. surrounded himself, and whose services have received no recognition from an ungrateful posterity. Count Pinto, at any rate, for his successful resistance to the Ciceronian eloquence of Frederick the Great, merited that epitaph; 'The Conqueror of the Never-Conquered,' which, according to another record of his countryman, Lucchesini, the King declared that the University of Leipzig had placed on the grave of the old Prince de Ligne for his services at the battle of Kolin.

"Gradually, however, the Marquis Lucchesini appears to have become bored by the King's dinner-parties and the subsequent recitals of royal poems. Concerning the table-conversation one finds more and more frequently short, summary notes of things which, God knows, were not short. We find again and again: 'A banquet of more than four-hours' duration,' or 'a sitting of five hours and a half,' or 'midday meal lasting almost six hours.' Only ancient Poland could boast meals of still longer duration. But as Frederick II., to use Bismarck's words, 'conducted politics in the style of a royal order executed by generals,' he had no experience of those wearisome parliamentary conflicts with which not only the Poles, but also every contemporary ruler in the 'free England' of the eighteenth century and—what is less appreciated—even the King of France, Louis XV. (not to speak of Bismarck) were continually harassed. Frederick consequently had leisure both to linger over amazingly protracted meals, and to be equally liberal in the service of the muses, by whom, however, so Lucchesini declares, he refused to be drawn from his allegiance to his Prussia. For even though the Berlin professor, Erich Schmidt, pointed out (was it peevishness or Byzantinism? These Berlin gentlemen are often

an enigma to me !)—that Frederick extolled ‘free England’ in languishing verses, Lucchesini’s assurances will console any Prussian who has been disturbed by the insinuation that Prussia was not free, and that the most Prussian of the Prussians longed to escape from the Prussian prison. Frederick’s ‘sentimental glorification of free England’ dates in fact from the springtime of his poetic career ; concerning the matured poet, Frederick, Lucchesini wrote on June 23, 1782 : ‘In general, even when he speaks as an author, he behaves like a king. Being a despot in his kingdom, he claims also to be sole dictator in matters of art and science ; whether as poet, orator, historian, or philosopher he is always an autocrat ; so true is it that the works of a writer plainly reveal his social position.’

“After spending some four to six hours over the midday meal, the King—who is justly famed for his versatility—in-dulged in music, and in the evening again received his literary companions for a few hours in order to read or chatter to them. Lucchesini refers to these protracted evening conversations as follows : ‘Conversation this evening indifferent and already heard before,’ or simply : ‘Nothing noteworthy,’ or ‘Nothing particular,’ or ‘Nothing new,’ and so forth.

“The ‘conduct of politics by royal order’ only took up a few hours of the morning. Mirabeau, whose information dates from about the same time as that of Lucchesini and is for the most part equally trustworthy, speaks of Frederick’s ‘manner of settling the whole business of the kingdom in an hour-and-a-half.’ Lucchesini reports faithfully every year the annual visit made to the King by the ministers of state. But even this one solitary personal interview which the ministers of state had with their king—it was the only time that many of them saw him—was very soon despatched. Lucchesini writes of the annual meeting : ‘Everything was settled before dinner.’ Reading such statements, Goethe must have reflected bitterly that his duke rarely dispensed with the weekly ‘*Conseil*,’ and that a Weimar poet, who ‘only in cases of urgent necessity’ missed these sessions, more often had to deplore a day lost to poetry than did the Potsdam poet, who promised to make and did make his ‘capital a temple of the muses.’

"In the course of Lucchesini's memoirs, which bear little resemblance to those of Eckermann, we frequently get such illuminating comments as the following: 'The midday meal was cheerful and lasted a long time, although the Crown Prince was present; the talk, however, was not about anything in particular.' Or: 'long but pleasant midday meal.' The 'although' and 'but' are delightful; but much more often he writes in this strain: 'Midday meal as usual. I heard nothing new.' Or: 'Midday meal of five hours' duration. In spite of the length of time, the conversation did not yield anything which deserves special mention or has not been noted already.' Or again and again, almost day after day: 'The midday meal lasted a very long time, but yielded nothing fresh.' Or simply: 'Midday meal. Current topics.' Or: 'Midday meal. The usual topics.' 'Midday meal of five hours' duration. The equestrian, Schwerin, was present. Nothing new.' Or rather more summary for a few days: 'April 27-29, 1781. During these days I did not hear anything that deserves mention.' This summary method soon becomes more pronounced: 'May 2-9. Nothing noteworthy or new.' Or the Marquis detects in himself 'a certain indescribable disinclination' and 'omits for many weeks to write in this diary.' Once we find simply: 'a gap of ten months.' Then for the last three years of the King's life Lucchesini has no records at all. Often, we find what sounds like a schoolboy sigh of relief: 'Usual midday meal. I had the evening free.'"

Hegemann: "Was not this Lucchesini perhaps a foolish fellow, who was simply incapable of appreciating the witty conversation of the great King?"

Manfred laughed: "You mean that the intelligence which won the approval of Frederick and of Goethe was a mere delusion? Wait a moment. You have not yet had any exhibition of Lucchesini's abilities—extolled by the editor—as 'the faithful echo of the King's utterances.' Lucchesini indeed records many remarkable utterances of the great King; not only that occasionally Frederick II. 'made game of' Count Pinto or 'treated him rather badly,' or that he 'made a violent attack on General Goertz' (the brother of Goethe's predecessor at

Weimar). No, the king's utterances are truly—as the Prince de Ligne remarked—‘encyclopædic’; there is hardly a single branch of learning concerning which Frederick’s prodigious intellect had not some comments to make. All the same, Lucchesini is not always satisfied with what he hears. Lucchesini, in fact, belonged to an old family of scholars, who had since the thirteenth century provided the Popes with able secretaries; coming from the home of the humanistic arts and sciences, he had naturally from his youth up been accustomed to stricter standards than Frederick had been able to attain in Prussia behind the back of a father to whom the sciences served chiefly as a target for his royal Prussian derision, and who thrashed his ‘insolent’ son, because he found him secretly studying Latin. Von Manteuffel, the friend of the Crown Prince, who afterwards fell into disfavour, and the name of whose castle, ‘Kummerfrei,’ Frederick the Great so wittily—and with only an error of punctuation—translated into his beloved French as ‘Sans, Souci,’ wrote during the reign of that champion thrasher, Frederick William I., to the philosopher, Christian Wolff, who had been banished from Prussia: ‘Every subject in this country is regarded as a born slave. It is certain that all the scholars would be banished and all the universities destroyed, if any profit could be reaped from it. Scholars are only tolerated in so far as they serve to swell the excise-revenues.’ In fact, when, after Wolff’s exile, the number of students dwindled, and therewith the revenues from consumption-taxes, Frederick William I. made efforts to bring back the banished scholars. The Crown Prince, Frederick, was firmly determined to have done for ever with this Prussian barbarism, and perhaps in his youthful ‘Antimachiavel’ was already trying to draft a splendid programme of Prussian monarchical reform. (Voltaire remarked in reference to Frederick’s virtuous disapproval of any princely vulgarity: ‘He spits in his plate, in order to disgust others into dropping the habit.’) It is a remarkable irony of world-history that forty years previously one of these very Lucchesinis from Lucca, a Jesuit father, also wrote an *Anti-Machiavelli*.

“Do not laugh at these Jesuits. The first king of Prussia

declared with warm expressions of gratitude that he would never have gained the throne without the aid of two Jesuit fathers. (13) Voltaire too was a pupil of the Jesuits, and had a great respect for his teachers; and Frederick II. became their protector, when they were persecuted and banished by Madame de Pompadour in France, and afterwards by the Pope in Rome, and soon almost all over the world. Frederick II. assured Pope Pius VI. on July 14th, 1775: 'I know of no motive more conducive to the welfare of humanity than that which led to the founding of the Jesuit order.'

"Goethe also relates that he met an officer in Perugia, who firmly believed that Frederick II. was a Catholic, and had received permission from the Pope to keep it a secret. On many occasions—for instance in the presence of Lucchesini and the Prince de Ligne—Frederick II. expressed in eloquent terms his admiration for the Jesuits as 'first-rate teachers.' It may be presumed that Lucchesini also had enjoyed a thorough education, and that this education was moreover (and especially) sound in branches of learning unrelated to the quibbles and religious hair-splittings which appear to have furnished Frederick's favourite, though by no means his only, material for conversation.

"Again and again Lucchesini notes down Frederick II.'s learned gossip. For instance, concerning the natural sciences, on April 18th, 1781: 'Midday meal. The King knows very little about the natural sciences; he has no great opinion of Linnæus, and, on the strength of a jest of La Mettrie, spoke of him as a charlatan.' Or of astronomy: 'June 20th, 1783. The conversation turned on natural science, of which he knows nothing, and therefore has no respect for the labours of others. Of the system of the universe he has very superficial notions.' Or concerning geography, on May 5th, 1781: 'I was astonished to hear the King place Great Tibet in the neighbourhood of Kamchatka'; or on July 8th, 1781: 'The King admitted his ignorance of the geography of Asia and of the European settlements in India. He showed himself very ignorant of the history of these countries, and he still believes the old legends. I made some protests.' Or concerning mathematics, on June

19th, 1782: 'As he knows nothing about mathematics, he refuses to appreciate the adepts in this science. Euler's death caused him small concern, and he has equally little appreciation for the merits of La Grange.' Lucchesini continues: 'There is no reliance to be placed on the King's economic calculations.' Here, on geometry, on June 30th, 1783: 'Foolish discussions on the usefulness or uselessness of geometry. I ventured to contradict the King.' On mechanics also Frederick II. held decided views. On August 2nd, 1783, Lucchesini writes: 'His defective knowledge of the elements of mechanics induces him to believe that this science is of very little value. On this subject he is full of prejudices.'

"May 9th, 1783: The King maintains that he is an engineer; but opinion is unanimous that he knows nothing of the subject. He would like to be deemed a geometrician, and has quite a clear notion of the hypotenuse, but he despises geometers, and therewith proves that he does not understand the value of the science.'

"As Frederick is famous as a flute-player, and as he composed a great deal more than is known, it is interesting to hear how he treated music. On June 21st, 1783, Lucchesini writes: 'There was talk of Gluck's music, of which the King has not a good word to say. He once had an act of *Orpheus* tried over in his room with two fiddles and a cello, and judges all Gluck's work by this trial.' Frederick's opinion of Gluck for many reasons seems almost to suggest that Frederick's views on music were really personal, and not mere slavish adherence to French taste, as was the case with his literary judgments. Voltaire, for instance, often took the part of Gluck in the bitter conflicts which were waged in Paris against Gluck, and, about 1779, Paris was the scene of the final victory of Gluck's music over the Italian school beloved of Frederick. In excuse for Frederick's failure to appreciate German literature, one often hears it pleaded that Frederick did not understand German, and therefore despised everything in that language. But with the language of music he is said to have been quite remarkably conversant. Nevertheless he had no use for the great Gluck, as is testified not by Lucchesini alone."

Hegemann: "You must not be unjust. Gluck belonged to a younger generation."

Manfred: "That too is sometimes pleaded as an excuse for Frederick II.'s failure to appreciate the great German poets: Frederick had no use for the younger generation. But with Gluck it is quite a different matter."

Manfred turned over the leaves of the ninth volume of the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, and continued: "Gluck is an almost exact contemporary of Frederick II. Seven years *before* Frederick's death Gluck composed the last of his greater works. As early as 1751 Maria Theresa furnished him with an opportunity for displaying his talents by her activities on behalf of the theatre. His first great success in Italy coincides with the time of Frederick's seven years' war against the greatest German Empress. Frederick therefore had another twenty-four years in which he might at least have appreciated Gluck after the latter had won approval in Italy, from which Frederick took his standards in music. Nevertheless Frederick persisted in his disdain."

Hegemann: "But is Gluck's importance so great that the music-loving King is to be condemned for not liking him?"

Manfred: "Gluck's work is absolutely epoch-making. He is *the* great classic in music. He did for music what Goethe did for literature. Gluck's two *Iphigenia's* are of greater value to the world as works of art than Goethe's *Iphigenia*. Gluck was a friend of Klopstock, whom he came to know and to appreciate at Strassburg in 1775, that is to say, eleven years before the death of Frederick II., who despised Klopstock.

"Gluck was a highly cultured man. But Frederick's failure to appreciate Gluck also and inevitably involves failure to appreciate Mozart, Haydn and other German music, in fact great music in general. Do not forget that Mozart, of whom Frederick II. also disapproved, only survived the latter by five years, and that before Frederick's death Mozart and Haydn had already composed hundreds of great works. But Frederick had no time for them. He was himself composing 121 sonatas for the flute and also devoting himself to Hasse and Graun."



Hegemann : " Why to ' Hass ' <sup>1</sup> and ' Graun ' <sup>2</sup> ? "

Manfred : " Oh, no, pardon me, I was not punning. Hasse and Graun are the names of two musicians, who are immortal, because Frederick the Great during the whole of his life lavished upon them the whole weight of his royal favour and kept them continually employed performing or composing operas, concertos, etc., etc."

Hegemann : " At any rate I cannot but rejoice that Frederick the Great, at least in the realm of music, devoted himself entirely to the encouragement of German talent. Did he not thereby become the forerunner of Wagner, the ' founder of the German opera ' ? "

Manfred : " That very Franz Liszt, whose words you have ventured to quote, says in his book on Wagner : ' Although Hasse was a German, his music was none the less thoroughly Italian.' The same is true of Graun, whose name was little known outside Berlin. Frederick II. was specially zealous in his attentions to Graun. There were in fact two Grauns, and both will contribute to the eternal glory of Prussia."

Manfred again turned over the leaves of a volume of the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, and continued : " Frederick kept both Grauns permanently attached to his suite. The numerous works of the two brothers are still ' available at Berlin, partly in the Royal Library and partly in the library of the Joachimsthal-Gymnasium.' I foresee that, in view of Frederick's enthusiasm, they will soon be unearthed once more for admiration. Of the elder Graun I read here indeed that he ' enriched the literature of music rather in respect of quantity than quality.' But of the younger Graun it is stated that Frederick first sent him to Italy, ' where Graun won great applause by his singing. On his return to Berlin, Graun was appointed conductor of the King's orchestra with a salary of 2000 thaler. From now onwards he devoted almost all his time to operatic compositions. Every year he wrote one and sometimes even two. Graun and Hasse furnished almost all the dramatic works for the stage of the Prussian residence. Graun composed in all thirty dramatic works for the Berlin

<sup>1</sup> Hass = hatred.

<sup>2</sup> Gr = horror

Royal Opera House. The composition of the operas seems to have been repugnant to him, owing to the arbitrary manner in which the King encroached upon his artistic independence, and it is said that they are almost all carelessly put together. . . . The German-Italian school, of which Graun and Hasse were the leading representatives, lapsed into oblivion, when genuine German art was raised to world-wide fame by the masterpieces of Bach, Handel, Gluck, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. The only work by Graun which has been preserved up to the present time is *The Death of Jesus*, and even this work, in spite of its many excellences, has been overestimated.' "

Manfred closed the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* with mock indignation and exclaimed: "Good heaven! What an abominable insult to the great King! *The Death of Jesus* the only achievement of the favourite composer of a king who mocked at religion as indefatigably as he played on the flute! How shameful! But everyone who has to do with this remarkable monarch is faced with the same baroque mystery: *difficile est satiram non scribere*.

"Is it not as though the essence of Frederick's whole life and rule were contradiction and romantic absurdity? Goethe was aware of this, and had it in mind when he spoke of the King's 'wayward, prejudiced, incorrigible mode of thought,' and yet it could not but enchant him to receive fresh confirmation of the incredible from Lucchesini.

"Four times did Frederick wage war against the German Emperor. In view of his hostility to the German Empire, one might imagine that the great King of Prussia would be the more zealous in watching over the development of his beloved Prussia. And his remarks on the education of his successors must have made the more impression on Goethe, since the latter had, during the ten years before his meeting with Lucchesini, enjoyed exceptional opportunities for reflecting on the education of a young German, albeit not Prussian, prince. Lucchesini writes under the dates September 26-28, 1780: "The Duchess of Brunswick and Princess Amelia have just arrived. Dinner with the ladies, little of note. . . . September 27th. The same company and almost the same conversation. . . .

September 28th. A fairly long conversation on the education of sons, in which he gave some particulars of the education which he has arranged for the sons of the Crown Prince. He says that everything that is learnt up to eighteen years of age is to some extent lost, and that a man's real education takes place between his eighteenth and twenty-eighth year.'—Three years later, Lucchesini writes: 'May 14th, 1783. He bestowed much praise on Louis XIV., because the latter displayed great strength of will in adhering to his decisions. He recalled the education of this King in the troubled times of the Ligue. Thereby he justifies the not very choice education which he is giving to the sons of the Prince of Prussia.'

"To doubt the excellent results of this 'not very choice' education would be unbecoming, since it won the warm admiration of Frau Goethe. But the incalculable King was again of another opinion. Goethe probably heard Lucchesini's impressions of the King's nephew, the Crown Prince; an interesting note runs as follows: 'April 1st, 1781. Dinner was cheerful and lasted a long time, although the Prince of Prussia was present; the conversation, however, was not on anything particular.' The Crown Prince was then thirty-seven years of age, and did not see his uncle very often. Still more explicit information is furnished by Frederick II.'s testament of 1768, in which the Crown Prince is accused of drunkenness, a violent temper, boundless ambition, indifference and laziness. The testament of 1782 is in much the same strain, with the further accusation of profligacy. Anyone who is inclined to see in this the natural ill-will of a gouty uncle towards an over-healthy nephew will be disillusioned by frequent allusions in the reports of the English ambassador to the low dissipation in vulgar company, shameless begging, sexual disease and so forth of the heir to the throne. Bismarck, who was far superior to Frederick II. in his knowledge of men, took his stand by the side of Frau Goethe rather than of the great King in his estimate of Frederick William II. On March 22nd, 1888, Bismarck said: 'We do not need any Frederick the Great for the future. A Frederick William II. would just about meet requirements, for he would not have been so bad, if he had not been spoilt by the women.'

Probably the greatest source of danger for Germany at the present time is that, instead of a Frederick William II., she has an all-powerful king and emperor, who is possibly still greater than Frederick the Great." This was the opinion of Manfred Ellis in the year 1913. He went on :

"In order to appreciate the significance of these comments of Frederick on his successor, it is necessary to know that in his testament the King foresaw the blackest future for France, because the education of the French heir to the throne had always been neglected, although this was not really the case. Further, he says in the testament of 1752 : 'With the exception of the Queen of Hungary (he means Maria Theresa, the German Empress, and adds : 'My conscience is not quite clear in regard to this princess') and of the King of Sardinia, whose genius triumphed over their bad education, all the rulers of Europe are mere pompous blockheads.' After the death of Maria Theresa, Frederick wrote to d'Alembert : 'I waged war against this empress, but I was never her enemy.' Woe to Frederick's friends !

"Admirers of Frederick and of Prussia like to suggest that the wars waged by Prussian particularism against the German empire were justified by the fact that they were waged and had to be waged on behalf of such a higher and more enlightened conception of monarchy as furnishes a pattern for the world. This contention could better be upheld if Frederick did not in his testaments speak of Maria Theresa, against whom he waged war so remorselessly, as 'a woman who must be counted among the great men,' and also refer with marked respect to her son, the emperor Joseph. Since the philosopher of Sanssouci spent his life fighting against these distinguished German sovereigns, and in 1782 proposed to call in the help of the Turks against them, and since at the same time he had the lowest possible opinion of the worth of his own successor, one cannot but doubt whether a particularly high estimate of the capacities of the Prussian nation can have nerved him for his terrible sacrifices of German blood and German wealth. I use the word 'nation,' which to me seems unsuitable for one single part of the German people, because Frederick II. used it, when he

said of his subjects in his testament of 1768: 'This nation is uncouth, lazy and unwilling to learn.' Later (1781) he wrote to d'Alembert in Paris: 'You would laugh at me if you knew how much trouble I have given myself in order to infuse some suggestion of good taste and of Attic salt into this nation, who, up to now have only known how to eat and drink, *faire l'amour* and fight; but I wanted to make myself useful.' The Parisians were duly impressed by this report of the royal labours in the German Augean stable, and Mirabeau shortly after came to Prussia in person, in order to admire at closer range. His report is an uncompromising condemnation of the '*étrange aveuglement d'un si grand homme!*' In these words did Mirabeau denounce the pettiness and shortsightedness with which Frederick II. tried to prevent his subjects from studying at non-Prussian universities, and he added: 'Frederick despised his people, and refused them this legitimate opportunity to educate themselves; he encouraged education, and at the same time put this obstacle in its path! Do not the experience and enlightenment which the sons of a country acquire in their foreign travels bring to it a profit worth a hundred times the cost?'

"But it was not only study in foreign countries that Frederick forbade. Truly never did a Prince compose such meticulous, long-winded platitudes on the blessings of good education as did Frederick II., nor commend more persistently the 'methods of education of the Greeks and Romans' or prescribe more expressly: 'The best and most necessitous young men, who most deserve the scholarships, are to be selected.'<sup>1</sup> Probably he did too occasionally observe these favourite dogmas of the period of enlightenment, which flowed so readily from his pen. But he can scarcely have understood them. Otherwise cases like the following would have been impossible. The geographer, A. F. Büsching, who since 1766 had occupied a prominent position in the Berlin scholastic world, writes (14):

"The King proceeded (in the choice of the exhibitors proposed by the Upper Consistory) according to his humour in each case . . . in 1779 among the most gifted, clever and needy

<sup>1</sup> (Cabinet Order of the 1, v. 1779.)

youths there was one from Berlin whose father was put down as a maker of fire-engines. The King wrote in the margin: "Why should the son of a maker of fire-engines study; he should get his father to teach him to use the hose. The others must be chosen according to *Capacité*." Isn't that a lifelike portrait? *Serenissimus simplicissimus*! But Büsching, the loyal councillor of the Upper Consistory, continues undaunted (or is he mocking?): 'This illustrates how the King entered into every smallest detail of the business of government, and cannot fail to excite the reader's admiration.'

"Even at the present day Prussian historians extol the seriousness with which Frederick II. conceived his duties as a pioneer of enlightenment, and they refer unblushingly to such pronouncements by Frederick as: 'Care for education is an important duty of princes, which in my case is extended even to the villages. That is the hobby of my old age,' or 'It is my main occupation to fight against ignorance and prejudice in my dominions, and to spread enlightenment. . . .' Similar utterances are to be found in the King's letters to champions of enlightenment residing abroad,—d'Alembert, Voltaire and others, who would scarcely have approved the popular application of those principles of education which the King declared in Lucchesini's presence to be suitable for Prussian princes.

"Frederick appears to have most democratically conceded not only to the princes but to all his subjects the same 'not exactly choice education,' which provoked Gustav Schmoller, a Berlin admirer of Frederick's greatness, to the assertion: 'Frederick the Great employed all the power and organisation of the state for the encouragement of mental and material culture: his political economy may almost be described as state socialism.' More comprehensive than Lucchesini's scattered remarks on Frederick's pedagogic wisdom is the information which Heigel, the president of the Munich Academy, could have given Goethe to-day regarding the Frederician national school system. Frederick II. died in 1786. Heigel writes: 'Up to the School Act of 1787, the school system was in its miserable infancy; there were only 195 schoolmasters drawing a salary of over 100 thaler; 30 teachers had less than

80 thaler. Frequently the shepherd or the nightwatchman held the office of schoolmaster ; after 1779 a number of disabled soldiers were employed, including some who could not even read and write.'

"As Goethe frequently had to attend to the affairs of the Jena University, he would probably have been glad to hear from Lucchesini how Frederick II. reconciled his treatment of the Prussian universities with those views on higher education which are set forth in such detail in the royal *Dissertation* of 1780. The position of the Prussian university system under Frederick II. was described by Professor Lamprecht, of Leipzig, as follows: '... at the universities only philosophical studies were encouraged, at the most ; for the rest, Halle had a grant of only 18,116 thaler, and Königsberg, only 6,100 thaler.'

Less Byzantine than Schmoller, with his admiration of Frederick's 'encouragement of mental and material culture,' the honest old Dohm (15) remarked: 'The most serious accusation that has to be made against King Frederick in respect to the moral culture of his people is unquestionably that he did so little for the education of youth.' Not thanks to Frederick II. and his encouragement of mental and material culture, as the Prussian 'historians' would like to make out, but in spite of Frederick and thanks to his death and thanks to Klopstock, who detested him, to Goetz, on whom the King heaped insults, to Goethe and to their despised language and literature, was Germany able to become great and united once more after the Prussian collapse.

"Although not a few of the many volumes filled with Frederick II.'s literary compositions make a show of philosophic, poetic and historical knowledge, it is difficult to credit him with any serious understanding of intellectual life, when again and again one comes upon such evidence of self-satisfied fatuity as, for instance, his reply to the doctor of medicine, Bloch (16), who in 1781 wanted to publish a scientific volume on fish, and asked that any rare specimens might be notified to him through the Chambers of War and Crown Lands. The King replied: 'There is no need to ask the Chambers for such a list, for everyone here already knows what fish there are in

the country. There are the same species everywhere, except in Glatz. There they have a species of fish called 'Kaule' or whatever the name may be. These are not found anywhere else. Otherwise there are the same kinds of fish everywhere, and everyone knows them by heart. To make a book about them would be useless, for no one would buy it.' Could a washerwoman have given a more childish answer than this royal Maecenas of the sciences? Or read the reports of the Prussian historiographer, Preuss, such as this from the year 1772 (17): 'The academician, Bitaubé, who intends to publish a history of the Dutch Republic, asks the King for six months' leave to go to Holland.' Against this the philosopher of Sans-souci wrote the following marginal note: 'He can write history here. Why should he need to go running about?' Would Goethe, if he had been at the beck and call of Frederick II., and had had to ask him for permission for the Italian journey, have had more luck than the academician, Bitaubé? Possibly; at any rate the famous Professor Sulzer, when he 'asked for permission to winter in Italy for the sake of his health,' got from Frederick II. the answer (18): 'If he wants to go to Italy, he can, but I have never yet heard of a man becoming well in Italy who had fallen sick in Germany.' Goethe had already heard of something of the sort!

"The King too had already heard of it. When he had reconciled himself with his sister in Bayreuth after a bitter quarrel, he wrote to her before her departure for Italy, on September 22nd, 1754: 'I should like to wait on you hand and foot, so that you might soon be restored to health. Probably the mild climate there will do you good.' And it would have done her a great deal of good, if the great King had not a few years later struck her with the lightning of his declaration of war, and thrust a dagger in her heart, when she was 'hovering between life and death' in her agony of mind. Read her letters of June 26th and October 18th, 1756, and of September 1757.

"The royal *caprices* of the great Frederick rose to dizzy heights in his comments on German literature, of which a number are reported by Lucchesini in his diary, and others are



included by the King in his literary testament. One may cite, for instance, the notorious *dissertation*, in which the sage of Sans-souci bewails the German confusion of tongues, and in the year 1781 declares outright: 'What is written in Swabia cannot be understood in Hamburg. Hence it is physically impossible for even the most gifted writer to attain supreme excellence in this uncouth speech.' Goethe, who therefore lacked this excellence, was consequently stigmatised by Frederick the Great as a writer of 'loathsome platitudes.'

"Could there be anything more absurd than the attempts ventured upon by Erich Schmidt, Sulphan and others at the present day, to excuse or even justify the *serenissimus* attitude of Frederick II. towards German literature? The King's admission that he could only speak German 'like a coachman' (if he could at least have done that!) is described by Erich Schmidt as 'whimsical'; Koser, not quite so obsequious, ventures to call it a 'subsequent self-reproach.' Frederick II.'s own judgment is more severe: in his *Dissertation* he speaks of 'our shame,' in 'neither recognising nor doing honour to' the masters of the German language, for instance 'the famous Quandt of Königsberg.' In spite of this fatherly solicitude for the insignificant Königsberg cleric Quandt (how one would like to think that it was a case of a printer's error, and that Frederick II. had at any rate some inkling of the great Germans of his time!), the King—who declared that 'to fight against ignorance' was his principal task, and who at his universities encouraged 'philosophical studies at most'—never 'recognised nor did honour to' the greatness of the Königsberg philosopher, Kant. And yet Kant, at the death of his unheeding sovereign, was already sixty-two years of age, and had yet as an old man to discover what was the true nature of the Prussian enlightenment concealed behind Frederick's indifference. Frederick II. had neglected to draw the attention of his successor to the importance of the categorical imperative and of German philosophy; instead he had made that Academy, to which its founder, Leibniz, commended the care of the German language, a French Academy, and had ordered it to publish only French works, and then, in his *Dissertation*, censured the 'pedantic vanity' of German scholars

in not making use of the German language. For forty-six years he drew to his court only Frenchmen or French-speaking individuals, and then in his *Dissertation* blamed the German court for hindering the development of the German language by their habit of speaking French."

Manfred continued: "In a letter from Italy to Charles Augustus, Goethe said that he had visited Lucchesini in order to learn more about the Duke's military activities in the Prussian army. No doubt the information he gathered was not confined to military matters. There were several subjects on which Goethe must have welcomed enlightenment from Lucchesini: presumably Lucchesini could give some explanation why it was that Frederick II. made Goethe a special object of attack in the *Dissertation sur la littérature allemande*, and whether this attack had anything to do with Frederick's new favourite, Count Goertz, whom Lehndorff declared to have been displaced by Goethe in the favour of Charles Augustus.

"The notes on German literature contained in Lucchesini's diary are, as it were, summarised in the entry under May 24th, 1783: 'Of German literature he spoke with contempt, and said that, as long as there were no classic writers to give glamour and glory to the language, small advance would be made. He admitted that a beginning had at length been made in this direction. He has a high opinion of the writer Canitz, who died in the time of his grandmother, a woman of culture.' This note was made two-and-a-half years after the publication of Frederick's *Dissertation sur la littérature allemande*, and it is valuable, because it again illustrates how ineradicable were the royal prejudices.

"The *Dissertation* provoked a torrent of well-meaning but quite fruitless attempts to convince the King that some progress had been made in German literary composition since the days of the Prussian court poet Canitz, who had been dead more than eighty years. Hamann, who wanted to protest against the King's ignorance with rather more spirit, was warned by Nicolai, who was conversant with conditions in Berlin, not to write against the *Dissertation*, unless he were prepared to risk becoming familiar with the interior of the Spandau prison.

Goethe too had lost the inclination to contend to no purpose, and put on one side his half-finished reply."

Hegemann: "All that I know of Frederick the Great's *Dissertation sur la littérature allemande* is that it has been extolled as striking evidence of Frederick's prophetic gift, because in it he speaks of the future greatness of German literature, and of himself as another Moses yearning for the promised land of the perfection of the German tongue."

Manfred: "These fine phrases delight the King's admirers, and it is a pity that they cannot be taken seriously. But in the same breath in which Frederick poses as a sad and yearning Moses, consoled by visions of the coming German literature, he wrote to d'Alembert: 'The grave of Voltaire will be the grave of the fine arts. . . . One leaves the world with less regret in the time of barrenness than in the time of plenty.' (19)

"It is to be hoped that Goethe was at least consoled by Lucchesini for the King's particular aversion to himself by a reference to the equal aversion which, in his conversations with Lucchesini, he confessed to entertaining for Aristophanes, Plato and Horace. That Frederick II. valued one thought from Voltaire's *Henriade* above the whole of the *Iliad* he had already announced. Here I find a note by Lucchesini, from which it may be gathered that Frederick the Great, with remarkable discrimination, divided all literary compositions into two classes, namely, good and bad; the good are by Voltaire or expressly commended by Voltaire; the rest are bad.

"On October 2nd, 1780, Lucchesini writes in his diary concerning the conversation at the royal dining-table: 'A great deal was said about literature, about the wretchedness of the German stage and the small number of good Italian tragedies; about English poetry and the poor impression produced by the Greek tragedies, the bad taste of the Latin tragedies and the perfection of the French theatre.' Does it not suggest that Frederick's criticisms were so slavishly modelled on Voltaire that he cannot but be dubbed a snob? I cannot think of a German word for *snob*. Do you know one?"

Hegemann: "Snob? No."

Manfred opened Meyer's smaller dictionary and found : "*Snob*, an uneducated and arrogant man who assumes airs of superiority." I opened the Tauchnitz pocket dictionary which lay on the table, and found : "*Snob*, a cobbler, a boastful man, who wants to be taken for something better than he is."

Manfred laughed : "What an insult to cobblers," and he continued : "In connection with Frederick II.'s intellectual 'vassalage' to Voltaire, if I may again borrow a phrase from Goethe, it is amusing to find that Frederick very often only half understood his great overlord, and therefore made the most dangerous blunders in repeating what he had heard or read. When, for instance, Frederick II. found fault with the 'loathsome platitudes' of Goethe and Shakespeare, he believed that his unkingly disparagements were sanctioned by Voltaire's adverse comments on Shakespeare. In so doing, Frederick not only forgot the warning which Voltaire frequently had occasion to bestow on him : 'Not so many insults !', but he also little guessed that, in the year 1867, the great Viennese, Grillparzer, would reply to his disparagement with the following praise of his greater brother artists in Paris and London. Grillparzer wrote : 'People are always talking of the disparagements of Shakespeare which Voltaire ventured to make, but Voltaire was very sensible of Shakespeare's excellencies.' Had Frederick been less addicted to abuse, he would, for all his devotion to Voltaire, have had a good word to say for Shakespeare and his disciple Goethe. Already in Frederick II.'s time Shakespeare was receiving enthusiastic appreciation from respected scholars of such strictly academic bent as Samuel Johnson. But Frederick believed that he had settled the question once and for all when he had impressed on his mind a chance utterance of Voltaire, eighteen years his senior. Voltaire had also not yet recommended to him the poetry of the middle ages, though it had long been so generally admired that, shortly before the Seven Years' War, the brilliant forgeries of Chatterton and Macpherson met with a phenomenal success. Therefore when, in 1782, Professor Myller dedicated his collection of medieval poetry to the wise King of Prussia, he received the answer : 'I will not tolerate such paltry stuff in my library ; I shall get

rid of it.' (20) There is nothing surprising in the existence of narrow-minded old gentlemen, but it is laughable when one of them is persistently credited with prophetic wisdom.

## GOETHE'S LITERARY CAMPAIGN AGAINST FREDERICK II.

"But to return to Lucchesini. In Naples Lucchesini may also have explained to Goethe what was revealed to posterity by Hans Droysen, namely, that Frederick II.'s *De la littérature allemande* was written at least thirty years before its publication; Suphan even traces its origin to a letter dated 1737. This King was therefore so little a father to his country that he did not scruple as an old man to foist on the German people a youthful work some thirty to forty years out of date, a work still overflowing with the unbalanced enthusiasm for everything French of a boy who could not forget the brutal floggings of his blatantly German father. For all his intelligence, moreover, Frederick had in 1780 not yet discovered that the barbarism prevailing at his father's court was something specifically Prussian, which had as much and as little to do with the German character and German literature as the *Poésies* and the indiscriminate subservience to French models of Frederick the Great. Even at the summit of his fame Frederick II. could not forget the humiliation, the hatred and the prejudice from which he suffered in his youth. It is not surprising that, in the face of such revelations, Goethe's gall rose, and that the determination formed in his mind to indite that bitter reply to the royal impertinence, which he composed shortly after."

Hegemann: "To what are you alluding? Did not Goethe compose and then lay aside his reply to the *Dissertation* before the Italian journey?"

Manfred: "He did very wisely suppress the reply referred to in the letter of 1781 and containing the famous passage about the 'self-willed, prejudiced, incorrigible mode of thought' of Frederick II. But Goethe's essay, 'Literary Sansculottism' is a most bitter and uncompromising reply to Frederick II.'s *Dissertation*, although for a number of reasons, including con-

sideration for Charles Augustus, who was in the service of Prussia, the name of the Prussian offender is not expressly given, but is screened behind that of a trivial and anonymous sinner, about whom Goethe would certainly not have troubled his head in the ordinary course of things. It is perhaps no mere accident that this essay was published in the year 1795, when Prussia had once again betrayed the German cause."

When I regretted my ignorance of this essay, Manfred immediately produced it. He laughed as he glanced into the book and said: "In order to disperse any possible doubts regarding the object of this bitter attack, it is preceded by a strongly worded comment on Prussian verse-mongering and a disparagement of Gleim, the Frederician composer of soldiers' songs; here Goethe 'says to Father Gleim's face what Germany has known for thirty years, though the many boon companions and servile admirers of this influential man have only ventured to whisper it, namely, that Father Gleim makes very bad verses.' This appreciation of the Frederician hero-worshipper concludes with a pitying glance at Frederick William I.'s tobacco club, and its scarcely improved continuation at Sanssouci—the snuff-club, if you like: 'Who does not call to mind,' exclaims Goethe, 'Gundling, Taubmann, Morgenstern, Pöllnitz, d'Argens, Icilius and many others, who with more or less dignity served, when occasion required, as a butt for the jests of their sovereign and the court, and in return could themselves venture to take some liberties?' And many others, and with more or less dignity. Goethe was too polite to include by name Lucchesini, who at that time had risen to office and dignity."

Manfred stopped and remarked after some reflection: "An interesting question: Whether an intimate friendship with a king and with such very remarkable princes as Frederick William I. or Frederick II. is possible, whether it does not inevitably degenerate into ignominious court foolery?"

Manfred remained in thought for a long time; then his eye fell once more on Lucchesini's diary, and he continued: "It looks as though Goethe had in mind the passage in Lucchesini's diary where he said of Frederick II.: 'Of German literature he spoke with contempt, and said that, as long as one had no classic

writers . . . ' and so forth. Classic ? Here is Goethe's royal answer : ' We are convinced that no German author considers himself classic, and that the claims of each one on himself are more severe than the crazy pretensions of a Thersites, who sets himself in opposition to an honourable company, who by no means demand that their efforts should be admired unconditionally but are entitled to expect that men should be capable of appreciating them. . . . When and where does a classic national author make his appearance ? When, in the history of his country, he is confronted with great events and with the happy and purposeful unity which they engender : when he finds in his fellow-countrymen greatness of character, depth of feeling and strength and continuity of action ; when he himself, penetrated by the national spirit, feels himself inspired by his indwelling genius with understanding both of the past and the present."

"Who was responsible for the lack of truly great events in the history of the German people and for the lack of that purposeful unity demanded by Goethe if not Frederick II., the forty-six years of whose rule were one uninterrupted open or covert revolt against the Emperor, and one perpetual and ignoble civil war against the greatest and noblest of queens, and with whom hardly one of the great German writers could feel any sympathy—neither Lessing, nor Klopstock, nor Schiller, nor Goethe ; all of them, after an honest attempt to admire, turned away in disgust. Hear how Goethe goes on :

" ' Compare these conditions, under which alone a classic writer, especially a prose writer, is possible, with the conditions under which the best Germans of this century have worked, and any one who sees clearly and reasons fairly will reverently admire their achievements and feel a decent regret for their shortcomings.' Did anyone show more conspicuous lack of this reverence and this decency than Frederick II. ? The conditions which Lessing, one of the greatest German classic writers, had to contend with in Frederick's own capital were so deplorable that he abandoned it in despair.

" ' It is no fault of the German nation,' Goethe continues,

'that their geographical circumstances tend to confine them, while their political circumstances tend to disperse them. We will not desire such revolutions as might prepare the way for German classic works.' What had done more to make this dispersion irremediable than Frederick II.'s Silesian Civil Wars? And what are the revolutions of which Goethe speaks, if not that abolition of Prussian particularism which was indispensable for Germany's salvation? Is it not as though Goethe, in the year of the Peace of Basle, had already proclaimed the necessity of the year 1806 and of things still more serious?

"Goethe continues: 'And the most unjust censure is that due to a mistaken point of view. Only consider our position, as it was and as it is, consider the conditions under which the various German writers have developed, and it is easy to find the standpoint from which they are to be judged. Nowhere in Germany is there a centre of social culture, where writers can meet together and strive towards perfection, each in his own sphere, but in accordance with a common rule.'

"Whose duty was it, if it was not the duty of Frederick II., to form such an intellectual centre, and what place was better adapted to the purpose than Berlin, the seat of the most splendid court in Europe. Liselotte of the Pfalz was amazed at the reports which reached her in Paris of the splendour of Berlin, where money for Leibniz's Academy was to be had at a time when Vienna was wearing herself out in glorious conflicts against the French and the Turks, and when Prince Eugene sought in vain to furnish his friend Leibniz with the funds required for the foundation of an Academy in Vienna. Frederick had restored once more the crumbling Berlin Academy, and had in his French 'Ode on the Restoration of the Academy,' congratulated his country on the fact that from now onwards 'the fine arts would again be victorious over prejudice, error and barbarism.' Then, however, he drove from his side Germans of the rank of Winckelmann, Lessing and Klopstock, who longed and begged for a centre of culture, and, by his extraordinary lack of discrimination, succeeded in drawing upon himself the contempt of all the greatest lights of German



literature. Goethe describes their sufferings in his attack on 'Literary Sansculottism' as follows :

" 'Born in a divided country, educated on extremely promiscuous lines, for the most part abandoned only to himself and the impressions of highly promiscuous circumstances . . . the German writer finds himself at length at man's estate, when concern for his livelihood and his family compel him to confront the practical problems of existence, and when, with feelings of profoundest sorrow, he must often, by labours which he himself despises, procure the means wherewith to do that work which he feels to be alone worthy of his efforts. Which of the great German writers will not recognise himself in this picture, and which of them will not confess with modest grief how often he has sighed for the opportunity to subdue the idiosyncrasies of his individual genius to a national culture, which alas ! was nowhere to be found ? For the education of the upper classes in foreign manners and foreign literature, whatever advantage it may have brought us, yet hampered and delayed the development of the Germans as Germans.' To whom does this apply if not to Frederick II., who not only banished everything German from his court, but afterwards even had the effrontery to rebuke the German courts for aping foreign ways ? It is as though Goethe, in his moving description, already had before his eyes the sufferings of Winckelmann and Lessing, the lamentations of Herder, Klopstock's dependence on foreign countries, the heroic efforts and sacrifices of the little court at Weimar, and even Schiller's tragic end. Yes, even for Schiller's death Frederick II. is not without blame, for Schiller would not have worked himself to death, if Berlin had been more prompt or more thorough in departing from Frederick II.'s custom of allotting pensions only to non-Germans. Schiller was already dying when he received the summons to Berlin.

"The lack of sympathy and the indifference displayed by Frederick II. towards his own people are fitly described in those bitter diatribes which Nietzsche later vented against the same lack of sympathy in the German philistines, who bragged of their culture and were in fact the true heirs of Frederick's senseless arrogance. The bitter tone of Nietzsche's comments is so

curiously reminiscent of Goethe's condemnation of Frederickian sansculottism that one might imagine that Nietzsche intended them as a sequel to Goethe's essay. Is it not as though Nietzsche were attacking Frederick II. and his *Dissertation* when, like Goethe, seizing on the German misconception of the idea 'classic,' he exclaimed: 'How is it possible that such a type as the cultural philistine should come to exist, and, having come to exist, should rise to the position of supreme arbiter over German culture?' And then Nietzsche, in words each one of which is applicable to Frederick II., rails at the philistine, who has no eye for 'that devouring need, which pursued Lessing through life, no understanding that such a man was burning himself out like a flame, no indignation that this tender, glowing nature was troubled, tortured, stifled by the mean and cramping poverty of his whole surroundings' (above all in Berlin, in 'the most servile country in Europe'). Nietzsche continues: "Pity that remarkable man," says Goethe, "that he was compelled to live in such a contemptible age" (Lessing lived in fact in the glorious age of Frederick II.), "that he was continually involved in controversy." How can you, my good philistines, think without shame of this Lessing, who fell a victim to your apathy, without once venturing upon that immortal flight for which he came into the world? And what do you feel when you reflect on Winckelmann, who, in order that he might be spared the sight of your grotesque follies, went begging for help to the Jesuits, and whose shameful death was a dishonour not to him but to you? (In 1763, Winckelmann wrote: 'I am utterly aghast when I think of Prussian despotism and the slavery of the people.' Thereby Winckelmann meant the King of Prussia, and he declared: 'Better a circumcised Turk than a Prussian!') (21) Nietzsche continues: 'Do you dare to mention Schiller's name without a blush? Look at his picture! That flashing eye, disdainfully appraising you, the deathly flush of that cheek! Does it tell you nothing? There you had how glorious, how godlike a toy! And you have smashed it in pieces. Not one of your men of genius have you aided in his lifetime, and now you wish to establish by decree that not one of them shall ever be aided!' Nietzsche

continues: 'Towards every masterpiece of your great men of genius you displayed that "antagonism of the unfeeling world" referred to by Goethe in his epilogue to "The Bell," for every one of you exemplified the churlish and dull-witted or the envious and narrow-hearted or the malicious and self-seeking. In spite of you they created their masterpieces; against you they aimed their attacks; and, thanks to you, they were cut down before their time, their day's work not yet done, crushed and broken by their struggles. And you are now to be allowed—*tamquam re bene gesta*—to praise such men!' (Frederick specially boasted in the conversation with Mirabeau of the great advances made by German literature thanks to royal indifference.) Nietzsche continues: 'Truly, exclaimed Goethe, we need a Lessing; and woe to all the vain stars of the magi and to the whole aesthetic heaven when once the young tiger, with restless strength visible in swelling muscles and flashing eye, goes out to prey!' Thus spake Nietzsche.

"This young tiger will come. Meanwhile hear the spirited phrases with which Goethe concludes his counterblast, 'Literary Sansculottism'; they are again every one applicable to Frederick's stale and pretentious *Dissertation*:

"'Far too late comes the half-fledged critic, who would fain light our path with his glimmering lamp; the day has broken, and we do not intend to close down our shutters again.

"'In good company ill-temper is kept under control, and he who denies that Germany has good writers at a time when almost every one writes well must be in a very ill-temper . . .

"'Every cheerful and fair-minded German sees that the writers of his age have reached a very high level, and is convinced that the public too will refuse to be misled by a peevish and carping critic. Let him be excluded from a company, which should exclude every man whose destructive efforts are calculated to discourage the chief actors and to provoke mistrust and indifference in the spectators'."

After Manfred had read out these words of Goethe, he once more relapsed into thought for a time. Then he continued: "A fair-minded German"—That was just what Frederick II.

was not ; neither fair-minded nor German. He drew down his chastisement on himself."

### FURTHER GIFTS FROM FREDERICK'S TEMPLE OF GREAT MEN

"None of the consequences of Frederick II.'s incapacity for creative work, however, hit Goethe harder, none was more bitterly condemned by the author of 'Literary Sansculottism' than the non-fulfilment of the Frederician promise to found an intellectual capital, 'to make Berlin a temple of great men,' as the King had promised in his high-flown language. How conscious Goethe was of what lacked him in Weimar may be seen from his descriptions of the intellectual world-cities, of Rome and, above all, of Paris, 'where the most distinguished intellects of a great empire are assembled on one spot, and by daily intercourse, contest and rivalry, gain mutual instruction and improvement' etc., of the 'Paris of the nineteenth century, in which for three generations such wealth of wit has been set in circulation by men like Molière, Voltaire and Diderot as you will not find in any other single spot on the whole earth.' One sees here in Goethe that tendency to overestimate Paris and underestimate London, which may be comprehensible to inhabitants of the European continent, but is not so to an Anglo-Saxon, since Voltaire, and even Goethe himself, derived from London and then 'set in circulation' in the rest of Europe, many of their most important inspirations in the domain of literature, politics and philosophy. But with Goethe it was not a matter of a choice between Paris and London ; no, he would thankfully have put up with Vienna, and later even with Berlin ; at any rate, it is plain from many of his letters to Zelter that he often contemplated the possibility of escaping to Berlin—which in fact underwent a romantic revival after Frederick's death—from the utter barrenness of his little town, though he wisely never made the attempt.

Manfred turned his eyes towards the sharp outlines of the cliffs around the deep blue waters of Capri, and continued : "Yes, it is natural that Goethe here in Naples should have

listened with a curious mixture of sympathy and envy, of curiosity, and almost of awe, to the Marquis Lucchesini, who had daily for six years been the table-companion of Frederick the Great."

Hegemann: "And was this Marquis Lucchesini, whom Goethe so admired, really a man of the world in Goethe's sense?"

Manfred: "If you like, and if you add a pinch of salt. Equally with Lucchesini, Goethe admired the lazzaroni of Naples, and says of them: 'The delightful gaiety to be encountered here on all sides arouses my sympathy and delight.' Could one have a better indication of one of the most important characteristics of the man of the world? In Goethe's eyes, in fact, these lazzaroni had in them much of the man of the world in the best sense of the term—especially the good moral digestion—and I fancy the admired Marquis Lucchesini had in him also much of the lazzarone in the worst sense of the term. When Goethe praised this Italian marquis so warmly, he only knew him as a society man. When, during the campaign in France, he got to know him as a Prussian politician, he was very cordially disgusted with him. 'The courtesy and friendliness with which he received me was very gratifying; not so the answering of my questions and the fulfilment of my wishes. He let me go as he had let me come, without having done anything to assist me; and I can truthfully say that I was prepared for it.' A good many years later (1815) Goethe gives vent to his indignation against the 'exquisite Lucchesinis and Haugwitzs,' who treated him with equal courtesy and disoblighness.

"Goethe's change of view accords with the aversion entertained towards the politician, Lucchesini, by the worthy Lord Malmesbury—who on one occasion called him 'Italian and shabby' and on another 'corrupt'—or by Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick and also by Napoleon. Although Lucchesini was just as much prejudiced in favour of the French as was Frederick II., he was dubbed by Napoleon 'clown' and 'usurer.' (22) Possibly Napoleon saw in Frederick's pupil an all too enlightened fellow-countryman.

"It is surprising that no one seems yet to have written a book

on Lucchesini. Who should furnish more matter for reflection than he? Frederick II., Goethe, Napoleon! Is there another man who was so closely connected with all three as Lucchesini?

"If Goethe had had the benefit of Lucchesini's experience, he would not have let himself be nonplussed by Napoleon. He would have been a 'man of the world,' and this fact would have been of unspeakable importance to Germany. And I can see nothing that should have prevented Goethe from managing very much better than Lucchesini, if he had enjoyed the same opportunities. But no judicious king and no vigorous national life (such as, for example, the English court and constitutional life) set Goethe in that 'world current,' in which, for instance, Shakespeare, Molière, Racine and Voltaire were set. Lucchesini was for six years Frederick's daily table-companion. Lucchesini was two years younger than Goethe, and he entered on his office with Frederick II. just about the time of the death of Lessing, whom Colonel Guichard (who seems to have ventured upon all kinds of liberties), (23) twice tried in vain to urge upon the king as librarian. Frederick II. preferred, in place of Lessing, to send for some insignificant French Benedictine monk, and exclaimed triumphantly: 'There you see, I can manage quite well without a German!' How it would redound to Frederick's glory to-day, if one could say that Lessing had been his librarian, and Goethe the successor of Lessing and Frederick's last close companion. Shall we rejoice that Goethe was spared the disappointment that would certainly have been his, had the good or evil genius of the German people or a whim of the great Frederick summoned him to Sanssouci instead of Lucchesini?"

Hegemann: "Why 'certainly'?" Possibly quite the contrary!"

Manfred: "How does it run in 'Götz'?"—"Because closer acquaintance with kings disperses the nimbus of honour and sanctity that invests them at a glamorous distance.' And yet, is it not fascinating to picture Goethe as the successor of Lessing and Voltaire at Sanssouci? What might that not have meant to the province shunned by the Graces! They had not the courage to place Voltaire's bust on the monument to

Frederick II. in the Siegesallee in Berlin, on which, for lack of a distinguished Prussian, we see the knitted brows of Sebastian Bach, because the latter once paid a visit to Berlin from Leipzig, and because all his life Frederick II. paid honour not to Bach but to Graun and Hasse. Poor Prussia! In the adjacent monument to Frederick William II. a bolder attempt has been made. Although Kant was, if possible, worse treated by Frederick William II. than was Voltaire by Frederick II., none the less Kant adorns the monument of a king, who learnt even less from him than did Frederick II. from Voltaire.

"How greatly art might have profited, and what Mephistophelian scenes might have graced the second Faust, if Goethe in place of Luechesini had shared the last years of the 'great' king, before whose *caprices* Europe trembled. Schiller and Goethe had still to speak euphemistically of the '*caprices* of the great Frederick'; at the present day appreciation of the German tongue has made such progress that even I, a foreigner, can enjoy a good German phrase, redolent of that great language which Luther, Gottsched, Goethe cherished and built up in spite of Frederick's 'coachman' gibberish. 'Capers of the great Frederick' seems to me more expressive than the Italian-French *caprices*. A description by Goethe of these royal capers might have risen to Aristophanic heights; for Goethe has told us: 'The so-called comedy is the true tragedy,' and 'that Aristophanes mocks at mankind is a serious thing and no laughing matter.' The description of the 'capers' of the great Frederick would, in view of the countless sacrifices of blood and worse that they demanded, be the most terrible Dionysian song of sacrifice of the German people. To the accompaniment of Frederick's capers and to the delight of Prussian professors the idea of German world-power was slaughtered. Frederick II. in 1776 (25, iii.) said: '*Si je reste uni avec la Russie, tout le monde me laissera intact et je conserve la paix*,' and this held good for exactly a hundred years and for the whole of Germany. Frederick was thoroughly opposed to unity with the German power, Austria. United with Russia? Even that enthusiastic Prussian, Gustav Schmoller, (24) (for whom Germany was synonymous with Prussia) declares:

'Prussia was from 1815 to 1850 almost a Russian vassal state.'  
Satire ? Tragedy.

"For there is not only something foolish, there is something even gruesome about the ageing and lonely Frederick II. ! He appears gruesome even in the rosy light with which indulgent eye-witnesses, such as the amiable Prince de Ligne or General Bouillé, have sought to invest the 'victor in thirteen battles.' Everything that they relate regarding their visits of a few days' duration confirms to an astonishing degree the trustworthiness of Lucchesini's diary and the unfavourable opinion of Frederick II. resulting from it. In the Walloon Prince de Ligne, whose father decided the battle of Kolin against Frederick, and whose grandson in 1830 refused the Belgian royal crown, I see the last nobleman of the Holy Roman Empire, the last living embodiment of this great European idea. He was a loyal servant of his Empress, the great Maria Theresa ; he had a sincere veneration for the Emperor Joseph II., and none the less he admired Frederick II. Later he was Austrian field-marshal ; he acclaimed Goethe in enthusiastic verse ; he was a friend of Voltaire, well liked at the court of Marie Antoinette, and he was appointed Russian field-marshal. On his funeral in 1814 Goethe wrote an imperishable requiem, 'To the happiest man of the century, the Prince de Ligne.' The happy Prince de Ligne also had a good word for Lucchesini : 'The Marquis Lucchesini could, without the least flattery, draw out the king in conversation, because he listened understandingly, because he is exceedingly cultured, and because his honesty and his wit pleased the king and all alike.' De Ligne also repeats a shrewd remark of Frederick II. on Lucchesini : 'Colonel Pinto once recommended the King to employ the Marquis Lucchesini as foreign ambassador, because Lucchesini was a man of brains. For that very reason, answered the King, I wish to keep Lucchesini here. I prefer to send a dunce, like yourself, for example, or Count Goertz. And the King forthwith appointed the latter ambassador at St. Petersburg.' The names 'Goertz' and 'St. Petersburg' have, it is true, been replaced by asterisks in the report of the Prince de Ligne ; but it would be amusing if I have guessed aright ; and it would have



been still more amusing for Goethe, if Lucchesini related to him this reason for selecting as Prussian ambassador Count Goertz, of Weimar, who, according to Malmesbury, sometimes received sharp reprimands from Frederick II. For Frederick regarded his ambassador chiefly as a postman.

"When de Ligne showered too many compliments on the King in his conversation, Frederick gave proof of his self-knowledge and of that frequently extolled modesty, described by General Bouillé as 'somewhat insincere.' Frederick II. said to de Ligne: '*Vous me voyez trop en beau; demandez à ces Messieurs et mes humeurs et mes caprices; ils vous en diront des belles sur mon compte.*' 'Ces Messieurs' are Pinto, the brother of Count Goertz, and Lucchesini. The King, without having seen Lucchesini's diary, rightly guessed that it would have some fine stories to tell of his caprices. The Prince de Ligne was an intelligent because a sincere flatterer, but he was not blind. It is clear from his report of a previous conversation with Frederick II. (1770), that he needed and secured the goodwill of the King on behalf of a de Ligne county which lay within the Prussian sphere of influence, but his praise is not for that reason biassed. His report, which was written immediately after the death of Frederick, observed the dictum: *de mortuis nihil nisi bene*, and was by a German nobleman, who wished to see Austria and Prussia united. De Ligne wrote with the skill of a statesman, who can clothe even hard things in pleasant phrases; with the result that Prussian historians delight in quoting his words, while men of understanding can read the truth behind them. De Ligne courteously excuses the Great Frederick for mocking at religion: 'He had formed the habit through his intercourse with the people of bad taste who envired him, such as Jordan, d'Argens, Maupertuis, La Baumelle, La Mettrie, the Abbé de Prades, or some of the tedious sceptics of his Academy. So he spoke of dogma, Spinoza-ism, the Roman court and the like. I finally gave up answering him.' Thiebault, for twenty years professor at Frederick's Ritterakademie, whose reminiscences are a thorn in the flesh of Prussian professors, similarly kept silence when the King teased him with tasteless gibes at theology. Thiebault

writes (25): "When I made no reply whatever, the King suddenly stopped, seized hold of one of the buttons of my coat, and said, looking at me sharply, and seeming to interpret my silence as disapproval: 'I hope, sir, that you will at least permit me to think and to say what I please in my own apartments!' 'Your Majesty has even the right to do so in the apartments of others,' I replied. He was silent, looked at me, and engaged once more in conversation.' Thus Thiebault; very much like old Ziethen! (26)

"The Prince De Ligne showed more worldly tact in compelling the King to direct his unceasing chatter towards another topic. De Ligne relates further: 'When he once had occasion to use his handkerchief, there occurred a slight pause, in which I succeeded in speaking of my business.'

"De Ligne mentions further how the attempt of the young Emperor Joseph to form a friendship with the admired great King led to 'compliments and assurances of goodwill; that everything was discussed with the greatest politeness, and that, after heaping courtesies upon him, the King made an incursion into Bohemia. . . . The result was, as we know: sacrifices on both sides of men, horses and money, little honour or glory either military or political, and much bitterness.' Yes, in 1778-79 the King had once again run wild in Bohemia. He had given his soldiers the order: 'When they went away, to leave *not so much as one stalk* for provender in the whole region.' (27) Frederick II. had not only in five weeks, through desertion and sickness, lost 7000 of his savage and undisciplined soldiery, but also—so writes the great Scharnhorst (28), 'nearly half the horses' of his artillery. But during this war the King composed his *Eloge de Voltaire*, and was supremely well pleased with himself. At any rate, in the conversation with Fromme published in 1811 from the papers left by the ecstatic 'Father Gleim,' and quoted with satisfaction by Prussian professors, he said in reference to his 'potato war': 'We fought not against men but against cannon. I could have succeeded, but it would have meant sacrificing more than half my army and shedding innocent human blood; and then I should have deserved a public flogging by my own guard!' The same humanity, when

the grapes had become too sour, was displayed by Frederick during his seven years' devastations, when he appealed to Voltaire to assist in peace negotiations, and suddenly announced : ' I propose in future to devote my poor services to the care of widows and orphans.' De Catt relates that Voltaire read out to his guests this pious reflection of the great military hero and added : ' Pouf, pouf, he makes as many widows and orphans as he can ; a fine way of caring for them ! ' Voltaire was quite equal to the King's sly jokes. As early as 1742 he addressed Frederick, who gratefully acknowledged the compliment, not as *Seigneur*, but as *Saigneur de toutes les nations*, the great blood-sucker.

" The amiable Prince de Ligne was less severe. He was ' kindled to admiration ' for the ' victor in thirteen battles,' and this victor, so Lucchesini relates, ' excelled himself ' in conversation with his accomplished admirer. De Ligne writes : ' Accustomed to chatter with Lucchesini, with no other audience than four or five generals, who could not speak French fluently . . . the King absolutely enchanted me by his encyclopaedic conversation. The fine arts, war, medicine, literature, religion, philosophy, ethics, history and legislation ; he passed lightly from one to the other ; the great ages of Augustus and Louis XIV., the brilliant social life of the Romans, the Greeks and the French . . . ' etc. The French general, Bouillé, reports in much the same strain in the following year (1784) : ' The King delivered his opinion on almost everything, for instance, medicine ; and what he said was always excellent. He thinks French literature better than ancient literature. He has an unfavourable opinion of English literature, talks of the absurdity of Shakespeare, and is very witty at the expense of German writers, who, he says, have no genius, while their language is barbarous . . . ', and a good deal else calculated to interest and enlighten a French general. De Ligne declared : ' The King is rather garrulous, but sublime—*un peu babillard, mais sublime*.' But De Ligne only listened to him three times for five hours ; Lucchesini had for years to listen twice daily."

Hegemann : " Goethe admired Lucchesini's healthy moral digestion, and you regretted that Goethe was not summoned "

to Sanssouci in place of Lucchesini. I fail to see how such a stay with the lonely old King would have contributed more to strengthen Goethe's moral digestion than his life at Weimar."

Manfred: "To be sure it was rather ghastly! Frederick paralysed, frequently overeating himself, (29) 'sublimely garrulous,' and obsessed by a craving to interfere despotically in all the affairs of a people with whom he had scarcely any spiritual kinship. His: 'I am tired of ruling over slaves' sounds like the utterance of the white governor of a negro state, whose despised language he has never thought it worth while to master."

Hegemann: "How you exaggerate!"

Manfred laughed in some confusion: "Forgive me! I am not expressing myself quite correctly. Thinking of Frederick I was reminded of Goethe's remark on Cortez' conquest of Mexico: 'His relation to the savages is similar to that of Napoleon to us; it is the grain which turns the scales when they are evenly balanced,' said Goethe to Riemer in 1809. But you are right; Frederick II. was probably nearer to his 'slaves.' He had become for them a mummified hobgoblin, who liked to chatter French without ceasing, and who very often played his pranks in a manner quite intelligible to German ears—'The royal ghost has appeared again,' said Prince Augustus of Gotha, when Frederick's *De la littérature allemande* was published. Such manifestations of life occurred when foreign guests, guests from that great world, so remote alas! from Berlin, paid their respects, and succeeded in diverting the royal mind from the greyhounds. Then he was no longer the bad old man (as Maria Theresa called him) who shouted at his distinguished public servants, in his father's German style: 'Hold your tongue!' or threatened to pack them off to Spandau, and who broke his beloved flutes on the heads of his valets. Then he was the Frenchified old nobleman, educated by Voltaire, who, (says de Ligne), 'had a way of folding his hands and saying, "*mon dieu*," which gave him an air of piety and extreme gentleness,' and who modestly feigned not to hear an allusion to his 'thirteen victories.' Greedily he sucked in the living breath wafted into the Potsdam mausoleum with these foreigners from

that great world now closed to one who yearned for it so passionately, and whose 'fairest dream, to be King of France,' or at least king and leader of a nation educated on French lines, had never been fulfilled. Yes, he thirsted for every breath from that great world in which Voltaire had lived, who (so Frederick declared), 'represents the culmination of the brilliant age of Louis XIV.,' that world whose citizens recognised each other by the freemasonry of a confident mastery of the French tongue, that world in which the memory still survived of the daring conversations and morals of the Regency, the world whose secrets Frederick had learnt from Liselotte's racy letters, and with which he was still connected through his personal relations to Prince Eugene and to Voltaire, that great world . . . from which Lucchesini wafted a breath to Naples, to the fugitive from Weimar, schooled in renunciation at the feet of Frau von Stein."

Manfred Ellis remained deep in thought for a time; then he laughed and said: "Possibly, in addition to the *Critical Selection*, there should be an unabridged German edition of Lucchesini's diaries. But even the *Selection* provides almost a superabundance of good things." And Ellis once again took up Lucchesini's memoirs. Then he said:

"Here again the faithful Lucchesini has something to report on a subject which might be regarded as the King's special province. On April 19th, 1781, he writes: 'Conversations on the art of fortification, in which, according to the evidence of the experts, the King holds mistaken views.' One pictures Count Pinto, who ranked as an expert on the subject of fortification, together with the Prussian generals present at the round table, shrugging their shoulders behind the back of the King, and one hears 'the great man being discussed by his own rascalions.' Occasionally Lucchesini too seems to have experienced some vexation; for instance, when Frederick II. tried to instruct him, the Italian, on Italian affairs: 'December 5th, 1780: The King has quite erroneous conceptions of the Italian villages and of the happy and emancipated position of the Italian peasants. I had a little dispute with him.' Lucchesini is careful to make it clear that such disputes did not result in

his own discomfiture, even though the King might indulge in offensive witticisms: 'In the evening the King was courteous, ingratiating and affable. He spoke of the impossibility of suppressing sudden sallies'."

Hegemann: "Does not that furnish striking evidence of the supreme kindness of the old King? I cannot yet feel convinced that Lucchesini was not a foolish young fop, and unworthy of the King's intimacy. In everything that you have read up to now Lucchesini exhibits more readiness for prompt judgment than capacity to be the King's 'faithful echo,' whatever the editor may say in his praise."

Manfred: "I should say that it was rather the seventy-year-old King who was peculiarly prompt in his judgments. Let me read you a few specimens of the 'faithful echo.' The King unfolded his views on history and religion; he spoke of Voltaire, of the education of crown princes, of German literature, of the art of generalship and of much else; it is all very wonderful. And Lucchesini's information becomes especially valuable, if it is compared with the detailed memoranda made at the same time by the King himself in his writings destined for publication, or in his testaments, which have been kept secret up to now and have only been seen by a fortunate few, of whom I have the honour to account myself the most unworthy.

"From these various sources we can compose a living whole, the solution of the Frederician problem from the mouth of the King, and a survey of the destiny of Germany from ancient times down to the present day. Hear Lucchesini as Frederick's echo on German past history: 'April 28th, 1782. Formerly there obtained the following custom in Germany among the princes and counts owing fealty to the Emperor alone. When they had assembled at table before their goblets of Rhine wine they used to enter into compacts of brotherhood, in virtue of which they made each other mutually heirs of their states.' These sacred compacts often led, it is true, to bloody but just wars. Lucchesini gives Frederick II.'s description in detail: 'April 3rd, 1782. In the evening I heard that the English minister resident in Vienna at the time of the King's invasion

of Silesia in the year 1740 expressed the conviction that the King deserved to be politically excommunicated. Afterwards the same man repaired to the King's court in the name of his government, and tried to persuade him to desist from the enterprise on which he had embarked, and did this in a speech after the manner of those delivered in the English parliament. By way of amusing himself, the King employed in his answer the same style of rhetoric, and after adducing a number of reasons, concluded his speech with the following bombast: He had received as a legacy from his ancestors the right to the possession of a portion of Silesia; even upon his deathbed his father had enjoined upon him that he should assert this right when a favourable opportunity presented itself; if, therefore, he were to abandon this enterprise, he should picture the Great Elector and his own father rising from their graves, in order to upbraid him for so base a disposition, to reproach him as being unworthy of the name and the crown that he bore, and to urge him to continue the enterprise with steadfastness and energy, lest he cause them to blush even in the grave for so degenerate an heir of that kingdom which they had adorned with their virtue and defended and enlarged by their valour.'

"In spite of this jest, Frederick II. did not deem it necessary in his historical works to ascribe to his father or the Elector known in Prussia as 'Great' (perhaps because he helped the French to get Strassburg?) a claim to Silesia, which they had both asserted. But in his works (30) Frederick explains with bold and mocking candour how such bloody claims are dealt with. 'When autocratic sovereigns want a dispute, they do not trouble about treaties; they do what they want to do, and leave to some industrious jurist the labour of justifying them.'

"After Frederick II. had secured those ancient hereditary rights, which he himself despised, by means of two fratricidal wars and an alliance with the so-called arch-enemy, he needed some political prudence in order not to lose them again.

"Lucchesini heard Frederick II. give the following account of the origin of the Seven Years' War: 'In the year 1756 the Duc de Nivernois came as extraordinary ambassador to Berlin. His intention was to conclude a fresh alliance with the King on

behalf of France. He offered him the island of Tabago, but desired that the King should write a letter to the Pompadour. The King was unwilling to do this.' The King, as we know, was unwilling until later; in the meantime, in the composition of satirical verses on Madame de Pompadour, he vied with the Paris rabble, which had then been incited by the Jesuit party against the once idolised, 'well-beloved' Louis XV. Later on, after his defeat at Kolin, Frederick tried to bribe Madame de Pompadour, but this time she 'was unwilling'.

"Lucchesini continues, echoing Frederick's description of the origins of the Seven Years' War: 'The King was unwilling. He concluded an alliance with England, as he believed that Russia would then be on his side. He was mistaken however.' Frederick found that the statesmanship of the English and the Russians was not so easy to cope with as that of Goethe. Lucchesini continues: 'He had no ambassador in St. Petersburg, because the Austrians had contrived that the Russian minister should on some trumped-up pretext be recalled to Berlin some time previously. This minister (Gross) was a brother of the Erlangen journalist, who during the first Silesian war was given a good thrashing at the King's command'."

Hegemann: "What was the King of Prussia doing at Erlangen at that time?"

Manfred: "I have as yet no detailed information regarding Frederick the Great's handling of that Prussian freedom of the Press, for which he has been so extolled. From Frederick II.'s correspondence with his sister in Bayreuth (13 xi. 1744-28, i. 1745) it appears that the newspapers edited by the professor of history, Gross, were repeatedly prohibited and finally confiscated at Frederick's instigation. But when Gross was imprisoned after the first prohibition, the great King interceded personally on his behalf: 'I beg you to release the Erlangen newspaper-writer; my thirst for revenge is not as great as you imagine'."

Hegemann: "There one sees Frederick's generosity."

Manfred: "His sister in Bayreuth also called him magnanimous for the same reason. This magnanimous King himself penned a great deal of daring political journalism. He did not



wish that a brother in the art should be punished with imprisonment merely because he was true to his Emperor."

Hegemann: "Frederick the Great all over! I should not be surprised if, at the next opportunity, he displayed the greatest affability towards his insignificant colleague."

Manfred: "I will read you one of my pencilled notes, quoting the words not of a Berlin historian, but of the Munich professor, Karl Theodor von Heigel, President of the Bavarian Academy: 'When the *Kölnische Zeitung* attacked Frederick II., the latter sent to his representative in Cologne a hundred ducats, in order that he might hire some stout fellow to thrash the objectionable journalist. The editor of the *Erlangsche Zeitung* even had to give the Prussian colonel who had chastised him by the King's orders a receipt for the blows administered. (31)

"But let us revert for a few moments to Lucchesini's diary, in which is comprised so much information regarding Frederick II.'s discernment as a general and a statesman. Very interesting, for instance, is Frederick's comparison of the great military leaders, recounted by Lucchesini as follows: 'July 10th, 1783. He chose three of the most outstanding, whom he placed in the first rank—Scipio Africanus the younger, the victor of Carthage, Aemilius Paulus and Julius Caesar. Lucullus was relegated to the great generals of the second rank, among whom were included also Gustavus Adolphus, Mercy, Turenne and Condé. Luxemburg and the Marshal of Saxony could be included perhaps in the first rank, and Prince Eugene certainly belonged there. This discourse deserves to be printed. A man who has won eleven battles and has eloquence and rare powers of expression has the right to rank himself on a level with the greatest military leaders.' You see, even in the third year of his stay at Potsdam, Lucchesini is still capable of admiration. It is, by the way, surprising that Charles XII. of Sweden, who shortly before, as a result of Voltaire's brilliant book, had become a favourite hero, should not have been mentioned by Frederick in his classification. The reason is explained by Lucchesini in another context:

"July 4th, 1783. From a conversation regarding Charles

XII., it appeared that he esteemed him highly as a brave, frank and enterprising man ; in his plans of campaign, however, he showed little gift for generalship. As he always fought against the Russians, who were not yet skilled in war, or against the Saxons, who could never do very much by themselves, it is impossible to judge of what he might have been capable under other conditions.' This judgment is surprising, because it is applicable to Frederick II. himself, inasmuch as the latter, whose army had all the advantage conferred by long training and single command, never contended against an opponent of equal prowess. The army trained by old Dessauer and subsequently maintained at the cost of infinite moral and material sacrifice, placed Frederick almost in the position of a man who contends with a canon against a savage armed with a club. Frederick II. said himself : ' A general who among other nations is ranked as foolhardy, with us acts only according to rule, he can employ any means in order to slay the enemy. Our troops are so quick and mobile. . . . With such troops one might subdue the whole world, if only the victories were not just as fatal to them as to their enemies ' (32)

" It required, perhaps, all Frederick's absent-minded absorption in poetry-writing, described in De Catt's *War Diary*, to make possible, in spite of the superiority of his troops, such astounding catastrophes as Kolin, Hochkirch or Kunersdorf or such disastrous and yet profitless victories as those of Prague, Zorndorf or Torgau. These bloody sham victories remind one of another remark of Frederick regarding Charles XII., at that time the object of so much adulation : Lucchesini relates at the end of his diaries : ' Speaking of Charles XII., the King maintained that he was either an arrant madcap or a terrible clown. . . . '

" Moreover the great King seems to have been distressed at his resemblance to Charles XII. of Sweden. At any rate Fr. Foster, the Prussian official and historian, wrote in 1823 : ' Frederick wrote in 1760 his " Reflections on the military genius and character of Charles XII.," in order that, if he met his end, he might not be confused with the Swedish adventurer.' But the death of the Russian Empress saved Frederick from

destruction, and he was clearly justified in the assertion, which he ventured to make in a letter to Voltaire in 1749: 'Fortunately for humanity people like Charles XII. are rare.'

"Lucchesini continued on July 4th, 1783: 'Of Peter I. the King said that he had great intellectual power, but that he was brutishly savage, coarse and uncultured. This monarch remarked very truly to the mother of the Regent, Liselotte, in Paris: "Signora, I have been able to improve my people a little, but I have not succeeded in improving myself"' Thus even the greatness of Peter the Great melts before the sun of Frederician discernment."

Hegemann: "At any rate no one will venture to apply Frederick's estimate of Peter the Great to Frederick the Great himself. No one could describe Frederick the Great as brutishly savage, coarse and uncultured!"

Manfred: "Hardly! He was successful in his own improvement. At any rate Lucchesini was able to report the results on October 23rd, 1780: 'The discussion turned mainly on literature. He spent five years in Rheinsberg. Here he laboured at his studies like an ox. He has four volumes of unpublished works.' But with his people Frederick II. was less satisfied than Peter I. with his Russians. The Prussian nation was, of course, itself to blame. In the *Testament* of 1768, Frederick himself writes: 'This nation is uncouth, lazy and unwilling to learn.'

"But that Frederick the Great took less trouble than Peter the Great to improve the condition of his people is clear from the unconcern with which he speaks of the disintegration of the German Empire, to which he contributed to a very much greater extent than his admirers are willing to admit. Lucchesini writes: 'May 14th, 1783. The King made a curious remark regarding the journeys of the Emperor. The first, to Italy, furnished him with a sight of the capital of the Empire, which is not in his hands, and of the Kingdom of Naples, which has been wrested from him. The second journey, to Lausitz, and the third, to Silesia, showed him two provinces which were formerly his and are his no longer. On the fourth he went to Lorraine, and saw the forfeited inheritance of his

ancestors. On the fifth, to France, he saw the lost Alsace. Now he has only to make a journey to French Flanders.' From Frederick's political testament of 1782 the initiated know that, convinced of the incapacity of his successor, he inclined to the view that, after the accession of the latter, Germany, being no longer hampered by Prussian hostility to the Empire, would undergo a revival and would reconquer the lost provinces. Lucchesini too heard him speak of this, and related on May 8th, 1783: 'Before the year 1800 an ambitious prince will transfer the seat of the Empire to Rome, deprive the Pope of the Pontifical State and make him patriarch.'

"That this was not an instance of Frederick's frequently fantastic chatter, but was said in all seriousness, is evident from the letter which Goethe wrote to Charles Augustus from Rome on November 17th, 1787: 'So much is certain: that the Pontifical State and the two Sicilies (with Naples) could be taken without a blow. The people are discontented, and the clergy, especially the monks, favour the Emperor. Only yesterday a seventy-year old monk said: "If I could only live to see the Emperor come in my old age and drive us all out of the monasteries, even religion would gain by it".' The wrangling nationalism of the nineteenth century seems to be a consequence of the collapse of the Roman Empire, the successful restoration of which after the havoc of the Thirty Years' War had been impeded by Frederick II. Until Frederick II. rendered impossible the realisation of the imperial idea, there survived the longing expressed by Dante:

Oh! German Emperor, will you give no heed  
To press your spur into the foaming thigh  
Of that jade, Italy, who champs and rears?  
And shall the Empire's garden lie all waste?  
And you, my prince, leave us to wait in vain?

That strengthening of the German Empire, which steadily advanced under the excellent government of Maria Theresa and Joseph II., was an object of continual anxiety to Frederick II. Under November 7th, 1780, we find the entry: 'Mid-day meal as usual. Evening. A remark: The House of Austria

would like to make of the princes of the Empire what France made of the princes who ruled in her various provinces.'

"Frederick II. had an immense admiration for Richelieu, Louis XIV. and the other sovereigns who (as in England) suppressed the princes of their country and the Fronde, and so made France strong and united. Yet Frederick II. made it the chief task of his own life to prevent Germany's achievement of a similar power and unity. In his testament of 1782 Frederick explained in detail why he believed that his death would at length enable the Emperor to achieve the unification of Germany, and that the Empire would then again become powerful, yes, that the German Emperor would then 'become more powerful than any European prince since the glorious times of Louis XIV.' That Frederick II. should have talked so frankly to Lucchesini might provoke astonishment, as might also the penetrating and even excessive self-condemnation implied in his words, if one were not compelled to assume that in the restoration of the German Empire he saw no cause for rejoicing, but only a danger to Prussian particularism. Frederick II. did, it is true, fully realise how ridiculous Prussian particularism was. On May 29th, 1781, Lucchesini writes: 'The King proposed a reformation of the heraldic symbols: for the House of Austria a Jupiter tonans; for England, the pirate captain, Mercury; for France, the star of Venus, and "for us, an ape, for we ape the Great Powers without being one of them".' But to the dangers resulting from this Prussian mimicry and the consequent internal wars and disintegration of Germany, Frederick was indifferent. To the fact that he had thereby brought Prussia to the brink of ruin he does indeed make some allusions in his testament of 1782; he predicts to a certain extent the events of 1795 and 1806, and perhaps still more important things: in view of the reckless extravagance of his successor, it might be expected that 'in thirty years nothing would be heard either of Prussia or of Brandenburg.' But since he believed that in politics and the conduct of war the result was mainly determined by incalculable chance—that is the gist of the twenty pages and more of his didactic poem, 'On Chance,' which Lucchesini had to listen to three times—

Frederick was as little concerned at the impending downfall of Prussia as he was at the decay of England, on which he enlarged to Lucchesini: 'The King considers England to be a ruined and exhausted country.' In the testament composed one year previously, Frederick II. spoke at length of the bankruptcy of England to be expected in the near future, and then tried to give these political phantasies the appearance of a carefully reasoned judgment by adding, with the modesty of Falstaff (who answered with a lament for the slain, when asked whether his boast that he had killed them was true), 'For my own part, since I have never been in England, I cannot predict the consequences of this bankruptcy, but I pity those ministers who are in charge of the country's destinies when the collapse occurs.'

"Frederick's prophecy seems the more characteristically inconsistent, when one recalls that, in *L'Histoire de mon temps*, he extolled the vast wealth and the almost inexhaustible resources, which 'the wealthiest nation in Europe' had at its disposal already before the Seven Years' War, and that these same English had since then, thanks to the obliging 'great King,' succeeded in conquering Canada and the riches of India. This modest 'since I have never been in England' is as touching as is another fact, namely, that Frederick had never travelled or seen a great city. How many inhabitants had Berlin in the time of Frederick II.?"

Hegemann: "The whole kingdom had before the Seven Years' War about as many inhabitants as has Greater Berlin at the present time—about four million. At Frederick's death Berlin had already 114,000 inhabitants and in addition (including their camp-followers) 33,600 soldiers."

Manfred: "And London?"

Hegemann: "At that time about 800,000; Paris 600,000; Vienna about 220,000."

Manfred: "In his youth Frederick wanted to go to London with Katt. But foreign travel was subject to the death penalty, at any rate for Katt. Frederick modified the penalty, but maintained the interdiction on foreign travel in regard to his Prussians. Were the subjects to see more than their King? He enjoyed telling Lucchesini and others about his journey to

Paris, and how he never got beyond *Strasbourg*. The Emperor Joseph II. was more successful than Frederick II. in satisfying his thirst for enlightenment. This seems to have distressed Ranke, a citizen of Berlin; at any rate he speaks of the 'tourist tendencies' of Joseph II. Frederick II., on the other hand—so Lucchesini relates—compared the Emperor with the Emperor Charles V. Frederick II.'s curiosity seems to have been very undeveloped, compared with his readiness to deliver judgments. In his testament of 1768 he expressly instructed his successor how very carefully judgments on political matters ought to be pondered: 'not rashly or wantonly, but after deep reflection and on the ground of full and exact knowledge.' How, in spite of this, Frederick himself could form such precipitate judgments on questions of the greatest political moment, as with his prediction of the bankruptcy of England, is a matter on which Lucchesini again throws valuable light. The King had frequently and eloquently extolled to him the virtues of the Spanish nation. Lucchesini explains the King's encomiums of the Spanish as follows: 'May 31st, 1783. His high opinion of this people was, I believe, in part instilled into him by Mylord Marshall, who conceived a liking for them after the unfortunate issue of the campaign in Scotland in the year 1715.'

"There is a certain class of old gentlemen, who like to stick fast to and deliver themselves of certain views, which they either formed for themselves years ago or else derived from other people, be it on Canitz, Quandt and German literature, be it on Spain or England. However ridiculous it may sound, there seems to have been hardly more foundation for Frederick's pronouncement on English affairs than there was for his castles in Spain. On September 12th, 1783, Lucchesini writes: 'The King considered it a great good fortune that he had been spared the diplomatic corps, for he said that it would have been very difficult to talk to them without saying anything.' This is more than a further touching admission by Frederick that he could not keep his tongue under control; these words betray something like a disinclination for having to converse with well-informed persons, who might venture not to share the royal views. When, however, Frederick was occasionally compelled

to receive foreign ambassadors, there frequently occurred such absurd incidents as that experienced by the English ambassadors, when they tried to enlighten Frederick in regard to his fantastic notions of the English taxation and financial system. While, in his *Antimachiavel*, Frederick praised the English constitution as 'the exemplar of wisdom, which he could hold up before his age,' he had in fact never found time to make a study of the English constitution. He judged English conditions by Prussian standards, and did not even scruple to put into print his fallacious conclusions. Voltaire did, it is true, strike out the passage just mentioned from the (only recently published) original manuscript of the *Machiavel*, but Lord Malmesbury's diary contains in the year 1767 the following reference to Frederick's *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la maison de Brandebourg* :

" 'I cannot help remarking a most notorious blunder, and which would almost incline one to doubt the authenticity of other facts there asserted . . . he says: "*George II. avait formé le projet de se rendre Souverain dans la grande Bretagne.*" This was to be effected by the Excise Bill: "*Introduire l'accise c'étoit enchaîner la nation.*" The absurdity and impossibility of this is so apparent to every reader, be he ever so little informed about our constitution that it does not merit dwelling upon. I have heard Sir Joseph Yorke (the English minister at the Hague) and Sir Andrew Mitchell (the English minister at Berlin) both say that they have demonstrated this to the King several times, but that His Majesty would never pay attention to them, and could never be persuaded to strike it out in any of his after editions. He perhaps was satisfied of the truth of it from his father. . . . He also might not choose to be convinced of the contrary, out of pride, as it might betray his ignorance, to efface anything he had once published.' So much for Lord Malmesbury.

" So that at the present time, Frederick's works still afford proof that the ostensibly well-informed King had a very vague notion of the government of the country, whose constitution he held up as a pattern from which political instruction should be sought if one were really 'tired of ruling over slaves.' He could not understand that, in the country whose freedom he



had 'sung in yearning verses,' the employment even of the indirect taxes was subject to the control of the national assembly.

"When in 1783 Frederick, in conversation with Lucchesini, foresaw the downfall of England, he was only repeating what he had written in his testament of 1768; at that time he was still very indignant, because the English had in 1760 ceased to pay him the five million taler annually, which he had truly deserved as the 'conqueror' of America and India—in which connection he was the most successful confederate that England had ever had—and from which he had been able to produce ten to fifteen million annually of his Frederician 'tin-plate' taler. No wonder that England's bankruptcy seemed to him imminent! But when he prophesied it to Lucchesini in 1783, he forgot that only the previous year, in 1782, a change of ministry had occurred in England, which had roused in the sagacious King of Prussia the hope of a new alliance with wealthy England. Thus Frederick, while in 1783 he was still prophesying the bankruptcy of England, had in his testament of 1782, in view of the—to him—terrifying prospect of an increase in the power of the German Emperor, appealed to his successor to renounce his 'hopes of France, and work only for a triple alliance between Prussia, Turkey and England!'

"'To renounce hopes of France!' Oh, how unwillingly did he renounce his beloved Frenchmen, in whose company he felt so proud and happy! Again in 1778, when he was contending against the German Emperor, he poured out his heart to his brother Henry almost hysterically; he wrote to him on March 5th: 'I have exhausted every means in order to win over the French (for the struggle against the German Emperor). I impressed upon them that their glory demands it, that their given word binds them to it, that it is to their advantage, and that only minor operations would be required of them. I should like to see the man who could find more arguments than I did.' More no man could do, but these hard-hearted Frenchmen refused to the faithful Frederick in 1778 the opportunity of shedding blood for another seven years. The only hope that remained to the disappointed King of Prussia was at least to set the Turks in motion against the German Emperor."

All these terrible things, for which Manfred Ellis adduced further painful evidence in subsequent conversations, were at that time utterly new and astonishing to me, and they set my head in a whirl. I was incautious enough to express my surprise at this reference to the Turks.

Manfred replied: "Of Frederick's lifelong endeavour to incite the Turks to fresh invasions of the Empire, or at any rate to create difficulties for the German Emperor, by dint of artful bribery in Constantinople, there is abundant evidence. At the present time, to be sure, this sounds so shocking, so criminal (to any one, in fact, who cannot adopt Frederick II.'s own narrow Prussian standpoint, Frederick's whole life must appear a continual conspiracy against Germany as a Great Power), that I never talk of this craving for the Turks without having in my head one of the many proofs of it. As I cannot at the moment think of anything better, let me read you a few quotations, which I have written here in the margin: In his testament of 1752 Frederick II., in the chapter 'On Foreign Policy,' described his activities at that time in the following words among others: '*J'avertis la France des desseins de la maison d'Autriche, je la presse d'éveiller le Turc.*' That was in the midst of peace. Later, in the Seven Years' War, it seemed to Frederick safer to attend himself to the 'rousing of the Turks.' On August 29th, 1757, he told the English ambassador that a Prussian agent in Constantinople was expending 50,000 pounds for the purpose of stimulating the Turkish eagerness for war. I extracted the following passage by Georg Küntzel from *Researches into the History of Brandenburg and Prussia*, which was published with the approval of Prussia: 'In January, 1762, Frederick still sees salvation only in an onslaught by the Tartars; he awaited the Turkish attack with undiminished longing.'

"Even if one were inclined to excuse this 'undiminished longing' for the Turks during the civil war, at any rate one cannot but be amazed to find it still surviving in the chastened Frederick of 1782. And here we come to something truly Frederickian: Küntzel, the Brandenburg scholar, declares that Frederick in 1762—as again in 1782—placed his hopes on an alliance between Prussia, Turkey and—this time—Denmark;

and continues: 'If, however, everything remained quiet in Constantinople, Frederick was willing to purchase for himself the favour of Peter by the sacrifice of Denmark to Russia. He was then prepared, albeit contrary to the known interests of Prussia, to guarantee to the Tsar the possession of Holstein and even, if need be, of Schleswig.' Could anything illustrate more strikingly Frederick's unconcern and irresponsibility in German questions, in which he affords such a contrast to Goethe, whose political vision embraced North and South, Alsace and Austria, with equal affection? But a staunch admirer of Frederick the Great does not let this worry him; in his view it was in order to contribute to the greatness of Prussia that Frederick was forced to commit all these heresies against the German idea. Germany, having been arbitrarily and designedly diminished by Prussia, was to achieve glory as a bureaucratically administered Greater Prussia; this was the intention of the Great King. It is true that this would entail the loss of Germany's future domination over the Balkans (at that time regarded as a matter of course) as well as of Austria, Hungary, Flanders, Alsace, Lorraine, and Schleswig, in a word, of the necessary conditions for the existence of a Central European Great Power, but what 'historian' could be perturbed at this, so long as the great Frederick had won Silesia from the anti-German, slit-eyed Tartar Empress, Maria Theresa?

"In many spheres Lucchesini faithfully carried on the work of Frederick II. Frederick II. had always maintained that only by Prussia would France be protected against the German Emperor, and that, above all, only by Prussia would France be secured against the reconquest by Germany of Alsace and Lorraine, and, in his testament, Frederick expressed his fear that, 'if ever the royal family should die out in France, no one could prevent the reconquest of Alsace-Lorraine'—no one, not even Prussia. He had underestimated his young pupil, Lucchesini. In the negotiations preliminary to the Peace of 1795, when Austria was deserted by Prussia in the middle of the war against France, Bischoffswerder wrote to Meyerinck: 'The King will not permanently abandon the historic policy of the House of Brandenburg and the political aims of Frederick

II.; he will be found ready to proceed hand in hand with France against the hereditary enemy, Austria.' Bischoffswerder, who wrote these words, was all-powerful with the King, for he dabbled in mysticism, and conjured up spirits on a specially constructed stage before the superstitious successor of the superstitious Frederick. Moreover, he was Lucchesini's brother-in-law.

" Frederick's policy of hostility to the Empire and support of France was completed by indemnification in the Polish East. Maria Theresa described the partition of Poland, against which she contended with all the means at her disposal, as 'an infamous blot on my whole reign.' (33) Lucchesini, on the other hand, followed Frederick's policy blindly, and followed it with Frederician unconcern, in the manner of the much misunderstood 'Prince' of Machiavelli, which politicians of the type of Bolingbroke, Frederick II. and Lucchesini seem to feel themselves specially called upon to attack. It was quite in the spirit of the antimachiavellian Frederick that Lucchesini in 1790 concluded the Polish Treaty of Alliance, which ensured to Poland the help of Prussia against any foreign intervention, and was violated in 1792 by the incursion of Prussian troops and the second partition of Poland. In 1791 and 1793 Lucchesini negotiated Prussia's treaties with Austria and England, treaties which Prussia repudiated in 1795, much as Frederick II. in 1741 repudiated his French ally for the time being, or as he tried in the Seven Years' War to transfer his support from the English to the French.

" In the 'Manuscript Memoirs of the Chancellor von Hardenberg' we find that Lucchesini also pursued for his private ends the Frederician policy of indemnification in the East, and secured for himself large estates in 'South Prussia.' These eastern acquisitions, it was believed, would further the cause of his friendship for France and hostility to the Empire. It was this perhaps that Napoleon had in mind when he called Lucchesini—according to Hardenberg—*pantalon* and *usurier*.

" In 1797 Lucchesini secured an audience with Napoleon and advised him—Frederick's '*émule et même supérieur*'—to humble Austria and abolish the German imperial dignity.

Napoleon was able to turn this Prussian visit to good account. He played with Lucchesini as a lion plays with a rat, and not only made a fool of him but retrospectively of Frederick too. Napoleon was at that time waging war in Italy with the German Empire, and the highly treasonable visit of Lucchesini, the Prussian ambassador, to Napoleon was a replica of that made by Schmettau, the ambassador of Frederick II., to King Louis XIV., when the French King was besieging the German city of Freiburg. In both cases the Prussian ambassador offered to the French monarch Prussian help and the office of arbitrator over Germany. Zealous Prussian historians would like to hold this up for admiration as an instance of Frederick's subtlety and genius, but Bismarck, with greater discrimination, censured in his 'Reflections,' this 'revolt of Prussian particularism against the whole German commonwealth.' Listen how Napoleon showed his appreciation of Prussian 'genius.' After Lucchesini's secret visit had assured him of Prussian desertion, Napoleon knew himself to be in a position of superiority in the negotiations with the German Emperor's ambassador, and he treated the German demands accordingly. It happened that the Emperor's ambassador—like Lucchesini (and Napoleon!)—was an Italian, a fact which, in connection with an Italian war of the Roman Emperor—the 'ruler of the world' and of many Italian possessions (a short time ago including Naples)—had quite other significance than when Frederick of Prussia or his successor could not find any educated Prussians, and therefore had to entrust influential posts to Italians and Frenchmen. When the Emperor's Italian ambassador insisted to Napoleon on the inviolability of the German Empire, Napoleon retorted sharply: 'And are you a German? Your name doesn't sound German!' 'I am a Neapolitan, General.' 'And since when am I negotiating with Naples? Has the Emperor no German nobleman with whom I can discuss German affairs?'—Thus did Napoleon make capital out of Prussian treachery; and the cowardly stiletto of the *Marquis de Brandebourg et de Lucchesini* again stabbed the German Emperor in the back.

"Other statesmen, who—like the Neapolitan rejected by Napoleon—fought loyally on behalf of Germany, were Baron

vom Stein and Benningsen—in the service of Russia. Napoleon wrote to the Tsar: ‘Have you not enough Russian noblemen, that you surround yourself with mercenaries like this Stein, who was banished from Prussia as a good-for-nothing miscreant, or Benningsen, who is said to have military talents, of which I personally have no knowledge, but whose hands are stained with blood’—an allusion to the murder of the Emperor Paul I.

“Subsequently, up to 1806, Lucchesini, as representative of Prussia, in Paris, was one of the many suitors for the favour of Napoleon, and thus helped to smooth the way for Napoleon’s Rhenish Confederation. Later he wrote a lengthy volume on the Rhenish Confederation. In 1806—again in accordance with Frederician principles—he worked for an alliance with France, and Frederick’s admirers would not be wide of the mark in assuming that Lucchesini, had the Prussian Government left him a free hand, would, by pursuing his pro-French policy, have avoided the defeat at Jena. But at that time, when it was too late, the German conscience despised by Frederick became suddenly so romantically quickened in Prussia that such an alliance was no longer tolerated. Better the ‘victory of Jena,’ in honour of which guns were fired in that Bavaria which had been saved by Frederick II. and Lucchesini from the German Emperor. In Württemberg too guns were fired in celebration of the victory! For there too, as in Bavaria and Prussia, the ruling prince had become king and ‘great,’ because he ‘fought shoulder-to-shoulder with France,’ as ‘the great King’ had recommended in his testament. When, after the victory of Jena, the King of Prussia, who had been swept helplessly along by the German movement, was un-Frederician enough to repudiate Lucchesini’s new treaty with Napoleon, Lucchesini, true to Frederick’s teaching, withdrew his support; he took his departure, became Italian chamberlain to Napoleon’s dissolute sister, and worked at his book on the Rhenish Confederation, that imposing sequel to the Frederician League of Princes, from which Prussia, contrary to the intentions of its founder, Frederick II., and of Lucchesini, was obliged to withdraw, because it became untrue to ‘the historic policy of the House

of Brandenburg and the political aims of Frederick II., and finally began to 'join forces with the hereditary enemy, Austria.'

"This is the little that I know regarding that enviable Lucchesini whom Frederick in 1780 preferred above any German."

Manfred Ellis continued: "And he was indeed enviable! Anything which brings a man of character out of retirement into the current of the world deserves appreciation. To be exposed to the current of the world, or at any rate to draw near to it, is in fact the inmost wish of many gifted men, whether they confess it or not. And whatever one may think of Frederick the Great, in Berlin—or at any rate so it could not but appear—there were greater possibilities than in the little provincial town of Weimar with its 6000 inhabitants."

#### GOETHE'S POLITICAL VISION AND AUSTRIA AS A GERMAN POWER

"In any case—incredible as it may sound—I believe that Goethe's political vision reached very much further than that of Frederick II., obsessed as he was by Prussian particularism. Goethe possessed in a high degree that wide culture lacking in Frederick II., which fosters a far-reaching political vision. Behind Goethe the poet there stands a Goethe of great international insight, who, for instance, longs for a Rhine-Danube Canal that shall unite Germany, instead of, like Frederick II., deliberately neglecting the construction of Prussian highways, so that carters and travellers shall be forced to spend more money in Prussia; a Goethe who 'in spirit and in love links together things separated by a wide distance on the face of the globe,' who appeals for the Suez and Panama canals and recognizes their significance with the keen vision of a seer. By far the most significant achievement of Frederick II. was that he spilt a vast amount of German blood, in order to play India and America, and hence Suez and Panama, into the hands of the English-speaking peoples. He had no use for oversea possessions. While Frederick II.'s geographical knowledge, as is apparent from Lucchesini's diary, scarcely extended beyond Bohemia and East Prussia, and while in his testaments he tries to

show the folly of acquiring oversea colonies, Goethe himself (so Soret assures us) once wanted to flee with Lili from the confinement of Germany and emigrate to us in America; in *Wilhelm Meister* he dwelt at length on the need and the destiny of German emigration, and prophesied the great development of Western America. Or take Goethe's understanding of the political tasks of the German Empire in Europe: although he had long ranked among the opponents of Austria, Goethe restrained his Duke from the treasonable adventure, in which—by dangling before him hopes of the Hungarian crown—Frederick II. tried to entangle him, and which was designed to separate Hungary from Austria."

Hegemann: "Are you not continually attempting to falsify history, by identifying the German Emperor with the German Empire, as though the Emperor were not contending primarily for the advantage of Austria? Had not Austria, by her great conquests in the East, long been an eastern, non-German power?"

Manfred Ellis: "If I look upon Austria, the reconqueror of Alsace (1743) and the defender of Flanders, as a German power, I know myself to be in agreement not only with such great Germans as Goethe and Bismarck, but also with such famous Prussians as Frederick II. and Ranke.

"As against the irresponsibility of Frederick II., who weakened the power of the German Empire by his treasonable attacks on Austria, Goethe adopted a political standpoint surprisingly reminiscent of that of Bismarck, when he defended Austrian rule in Hungary. 'It is a singular modesty,' said Bismarck, 'that prevents the recognition of Austria as a German power. The only reason I can conceive for it is that Austria is so fortunate as to rule over alien races, who were long ago reduced to subjection by German arms. I cannot, however, bring myself to believe that, because Slovaks and Ruthenians are subject to Austrian rule, they are therefore the representatives of the State, while the Germans are merely a casual appendage of a slavonic Austria; in Austria I recognise the heir of an old German power, which has often and gloriously wielded the German sword'."



Hegemann : " Ought one to attribute any decisive importance to a remark which Bismarck may once have uttered for some political reason ? "

Manfred : " If the poetic force of Bismarck's words is as powerless to convince you as their sound sense, may I venture to bring forward Frederick II. himself as king's evidence ? It seems to me a really diverting testimony. In his testament of 1752 Frederick II. described the immense power which the German Emperor had retained in spite of the loss of Silesia. Then he continues : '*Après l'Allemagne la France est la monarchie la plus puissante de l'Europe.*' To the words '*l'Allemagne*' Frederick's admirer, Lehmann, of Gottingen, in editing an extract from the testament of 1752, has added a footnote : 'The King means Austria !' (34) Naturally the King meant Austria ! For Germany was, thanks to Austrian leadership, the 'most powerful monarchy in Europe,' until Frederick dismembered this Germany for all time, and bequeathed for all time Bismarck's *cauchemar des coalitions*. Ranke himself had to admit that—even after the Seven Years' War—'the Empire still had a worldwide significance,' and that 'a German power was at that time in the possession of the Emperor.' Ernest Moritz Arndt expressed himself to much the same effect. Do not forget that the German imperial crown belonged to the House of Austria from 1438 to 1806, that is to say, for more than three-and-a-half centuries, with the sole exception of the three years 1742-1745, in which Charles VII., the 'puppet' of the French and of Frederick II., endeavoured to wrest the imperial throne from the great Maria Theresa. No one but Frederick II. is to blame for the crime of 1740, which Arndt described as 'the last great cleavage of the German nation, the irremediable cleavage, which will perhaps involve its destruction.'

" Goethe did not consider that the German Empire was subject to alien domination from 1438 to 1742 and from 1745 to 1806 ; like Bismarck, he regarded Austria as a German power, and, like Bismarck, he appreciated the proud and mighty task which therewith devolved upon the Germans in Austria and in the other portions of the German Empire, as upon any great nation which is called upon to occupy an important position

in the world. Goethe said: 'It needs a prudent, intelligent and energetic government, in order to hold together such various races in peaceful union.' Maria Theresa was in this sense in the highest degree 'intelligent.' The manner in which she won the hearts of the formerly seditious Hungarians commanded the admiration of the whole world, even of the hostile Frederick II. What, on the other hand, is one to say of Frederick's attempt to alienate the Hungarians from her? Will the Prussian attempts to win the hearts of the subjected Poles be as 'intelligent' as the achievement of Maria Theresa? Or are not the Prusso-German attempts to reconquer or retain the German territories on the left bank of the Rhine doomed to failure? These territories were, through the fault of Frederick II., too long alienated from the Empire, and their recovery needs more than the glamour of the Hohenzollern and Frederician legend. It is also proof of Goethe's political vision that he paved the way for a language union of the Germans, which should include not only the Rhine valley from Basle to Mainz and the whole of Upper Germany including Switzerland, but especially also Alsace, where he knows from his own observation that 'German culture and German customs predominate.' And when Goethe added that in Alsace 'the advantages of the (French) national unity in which it is included are recognised,' and that 'no one has any desire for German disintegration,' is this not a clear accusation against Frederick II., who indeed was so satisfied with his experience of the Alsatian mercenaries in his army that he finally described them as 'as good as our own countrymen.' Frederick, as the upholder of German disintegration, boasted again and again that he had secured Alsace and Lorraine to the French, and his last exploit was to deliver over Bavaria and the Palatinate to French influence.

"How exactly the difference in the respective attitudes towards Alsatian questions of Goethe and Frederick II. corresponds with their attitude towards the German language! The adherence of the Alsations to German language and customs is explained by Goethe as follows: 'If a conquered man is compelled to forfeit half his existence, he would be ashamed

to abandon of his own accord the other half. He therefore holds fast to everything that reminds him of the blissful past or that fosters in him the hope of a return of those happy days'; and Goethe relates how, realising that he must always rank as an outsider in the realm of the French language which he loved, he and his Strassburg fellow-students decided 'to give up the French language altogether, and to devote ourselves to our mother-tongue with greater energy and zeal than hitherto.' With Frederick II. exactly the opposite occurred. The fact that, as Goethe expresses it, 'his French poets, philosophers and litterateurs continually annoyed him and repeatedly declared that he was only to be regarded and treated as an intruder,' only made the King more determined and reckless in the abandonment of his mother-tongue, and in his dependence on his judges of French poetry—whether Voltaire, de Prades, de Catt or Lucchesini—whose task it was to improve his servile French compositions.

"In this connection Macaulay seems to me to have made a profound observation: ' (Frederick) had not the full command of any language. . . . Even had he possessed the poetic faculty of which, as far as we can judge, he was utterly destitute, the want of a language would have prevented him from being a great poet.'

"Might one not perhaps go much further, and say that want of a language is such a serious defect that it must disqualify a man for any creative work whatsoever in the highest sense? In any case for creative work in the domain of national politics. It might perhaps be asked whether want of a fatherland—how else is one to describe the worse than medieval wretchedness of want of a language?—did not perhaps qualify Frederick II. for a higher, supernational outlook? Did he perhaps foresee and oppose the dangers of a frenzied nationalism? Not so! He had none of the prophetic vision of a seer. His aim was to create, within the German nation, his small thrashed and bloodstained separate nation, the Prussian. And to what end? To this question the great Frederick gave another but a clearer answer than that of the Prussian historians, who insist upon the mysterious superiority of Prussia's own little separate culture.

Yes, to what end? This is the answer given by Frederick in 1758 in a conversation with his confidential companion, de Catt: '... We must have more fighting! Why? In order to make a name for ourselves!' or in 1770 in a letter to d'Alembert: 'There have always been wars, and what has always been is necessary—even if one knows not why!—so the war-fury will continue to devastate this unhappy globe. . . . Even assuming that it were possible (says Frederick, in another context but in the same letter) to deliver humanity from such an error, there remains the question: Would it be worth while?' How true! In fact, so long as kings such as Frederick II. are tolerated and even admired, the 'war-fury will continue to devastate this unhappy globe.'

### FREDERICK'S POLISH ACQUISITIONS AND TRADE POLICY

"But let us forget the swashbuckling propensities of the royal snuff-taker and strive once more towards Goethe's ideal heights. In Goethe we find these two great ideas, which Frederick II. lacked and without which a great statesman cannot be conceived: a sense of the value of nationalism, together with the capacity to stand above nations.

"'God has given to every people a prophet in its own language'; Goethe referred to this sentence from the Koran in the same letter in which he begged for Carlyle's cooperation in an international understanding.

"Frederick II. once tried to win Voltaire's respect by the boast: 'I have constructed great roads in the Silisian mountains in order to facilitate trade' (II, x. 1773). Frederick's pious historian, Preuss, found this exaggeration a little too flagrant, and explains: 'This must be taken to mean at most a few ordinary country roads. . . . Frederick did not construct a single mile of first-class roadway'." (35)

Hegemann: "But Frederick did construct canals!"

Manfred: "Yes, that was very much in the fashion in his age. But even these he ruined by his short-sighted policy in regard to tolls. Mirabeau relates that in the Kurmark alone

there were 28 farmed tolls and 8 farmed locks, and 29 non-farmed tolls and 6 non-farmed locks. And Frederick's admirer, Dohm (iv. 422), admits: "The carters and watermen took any route by which they might avoid entering Prussian territory. In view of the extortions and delays, they preferred a far more expensive route, if only it did not cross the Prussian frontier."

"Possibly Goethe had all this in mind, when he said to Odyniec in 1829: 'It is just as much the duty of the better and more educated classes to exert a soothing and reconciling influence on international relations as to facilitate shipping and to construct roads over the mountains. . . . The fact that this has not been done hitherto is to be attributed solely to the fact that international collaboration has no fixed moral laws and foundations . . . , moral laws in whose establishment Frederick II., despite his *Antimachiavel*, failed to cooperate, and of whose violation he is expressly accused by the great Maria Theresa, in connection with the partition of Poland, which Frederick II. forced upon her.

"To Lucchesini's zealous emulation of Frederick in connection with the Polish question I have already referred. D'Alembert once wrote to Frederick II. that the King would deserve to be named 'the Great,' if he should succeed in unravelling the Polish imbroglio and restoring peace among the nations of Europe. 'Your Majesty would then resemble the judge who called together the contending parties, made them laugh at their squabble, and finally persuaded them to embrace one another and return contentedly to their homes. That, Sire, is what humanity awaits from you.' Frederick II. made huge sport of these impracticable suggestions of d'Alembert, and sent him in reply the coin with the inscription borrowed from Louis XIV., 'REGNO REDINTEGRATO,' which he had just had struck in honour of his Polish depredation and as a memorial of an exploit which seemed to him more profitable than the preservation of peace. As moral justification of the partition of Poland the Prussian historians point to the Polish unrest which was bound to continue indefinitely, so long as Poland remained an electoral kingdom. The Prussian historians dwell less upon the fact that

Frederick II. did his utmost to prevent the conversion of the electoral kingship into a hereditary kingship. That an intellectually atrophied Prussia—as contrasted with the France of Louis XIV. with its exuberant intellectual energy—would have difficulty in digesting the Polish conquests, that the anguish of the Prussians at their own confinement would find vent in a flood of German songs on Polish liberation,<sup>1</sup> that German territory would be polonised, and that Bismarck would not emerge victorious from bitter Polish conflicts—all this was as little feared by the practical King as by the still more practical Lucchesini, who in 1793 and 1795 further instructed the Poles in the wisdom of the Frederician *Antimachiavel*. D'Alembert, who was dependent on Frederick's annual allowance, was not stooping to flattery when he thanked the King with the words: 'The inscription on your coinage shows that Your Majesty has only reconquered for yourself lost provinces.' Goethe, who by no means disapproved of *successful* political acquisitions, subsequently published some remarkable reflections on the steps which might be taken to make the German language once more current in these 'reconquered' provinces. Goethe's proposals were set aside, in order to give place to more practical, Prussian measures, the success of which may be admired to-day by anyone to whom they appeal."

Hegemann: "Your criticism of the partition of Poland does not convince me, because Frederick the Great himself, in contrast to Lucchesini, and very wisely, only reconquered old German territory, which could in fact easily be re-germanised."

Manfred: "It is above all in respect of this Polish germanisation that Frederick II. seems to me to have erred in the most shortsighted way. Such successes as he achieved were utterly wiped out by his systematic undermining of the German nationality in Danzig. Do not forget that Danzig lies in the delta of a river-basin about as large as that of the Rhine." Ellis took up a dictionary and continued: "But in the year 1906 only 448 ships passed along the Vistula upstream at Thorn,

<sup>1</sup> The editor has no need to say that he does not concur with all Manfred's opinions, but he was surprised to see that one of the declared admirers of Frederick II., Hans Delbrück, recently published a collection of Polish songs written by Germans and expressed his admiration of these poems.

while on the Rhine in the year 1904, 19,986 ships passed upstream at Emmerich. South of Danzig there lies one of the great inland territories of the world, stagnant, dead! And it stands as a monument to Frederick's economic wisdom that Danzig has not developed like Amsterdam or Hamburg or—if you prefer events of the nineteenth century—like Antwerp, or like Montreal or Chicago, cities with a territory at back of them originally much less thickly populated than that of Danzig."

Hegemann: "But how can you make Frederick II. responsible for this, and say that he systematically obstructed the trade of the German town of Danzig?"

Ellis evaded the question and said: "Let us hear what our faithful disciple of the Jesuits, Lucchesini, has to say about the trade-policy of Frederick II."

Manfred took up once more Lucchesini's memoirs, and began again after a pause: "Here Lucchesini ventures once again, at any rate in his diary, to disagree with the great King. He writes on May 14th, 1781:

"'The King spoke of the principles of trade policy, and proved that his own are by no means correct, since they aim at controlling the trade of every single individual, instead of allowing free scope to the activity of *all*.' As regards the restrictions which Frederick II. imposed on trade within the German Empire, Lucchesini cites a few examples, such as the following: 'The King has issued a decree against the sale of eggs from Bohemia in his states.' Lucchesini's visitor from Weimar can hardly have listened to such reports without interest.

"We know how keenly Goethe interested himself in the affairs of everyday life, such as trade and commerce: 'The cursed fact that we are consuming the vital sap of the country, makes it impossible that we should enjoy the blessings of prosperity,' and 'Everywhere one hears it said that the country is poor and is becoming poorer. . . . One sees the continued perpetration of one irremediable blunder after another. . . .' and 'Here the drama makes no progress, it is execrable that the King of Tauris should speak as though no stocking-weaver in Apolda were starving.' These utterances of Goethe date from the years

between Frederick's last armed conflict with the Emperor and Goethe's meeting with Lucchesini. Against the impoverishment of the country the most devoted ministerial labour in the small states was powerless, so long as 'blunders' were perpetrated in the great state, so long as the trade of the Empire was suffering under that ceaseless customs war, which Frederick II. waged against his neighbours in the Empire during the forty-six years of his reign, because, like many another dynast of that time, he looked upon his disconnected scraps of territory and population as a *nation*, to which could be applied those economic principles which Louis XIV. and his great ministers had developed for France as a whole. In any case. . . ." Manfred paused for a moment ; then he continued :

" In any case it is not always easy to discover any sense in the Prussian customs policy. In 1765 Frederick II. built up a customs barricade against West Prussia, and placed at the disposal of his ambassador in St. Petersburg, for the purpose of bribery, 70,000 taler, with which to purchase Russian approval of the customs office at Marienwerder on the Vistula. (36) Was Russia known to be a partisan of free trade between Brandenburg and Prussia ? Or was Frederick II.'s customs war against West Prussia part of a plan to barter away East Prussia to the Russians ? Lehmann, of Göttingen, an unquestionably trustworthy authority, gives a similar account of the customs-barriers which Frederick II. constructed against his own Western provinces, because he intended to get rid of these vulnerable outworks. (37) His attitude on this question is expressed in his peace proposals before Maxen in 1758.

" Lehmann writes in his three-volume work on Baron vom Stein (38) : ' A portion of his provinces, namely, those lying on the other side of the Weser, Frederick II. treated, in respect of his customs-policy, as a foreign country, and forbade access of their goods to his other provinces, but between the latter also he established customs-barriers. Baron von Heinitz was the first to formulate the great theory, that the various territories composing the state must be free to effect a mutual exchange of their products, and in this way cement their union the more firmly.'



"Heinitz, however, was not placed at the head of the Trade-and-Factories Department until 1782, and even then his clear and very stimulating theories failed to make any impression on the wayward king. In reply to Heinitz's personal report of October 30th, 1783, the more enlightened king wrote: 'I manage that myself, so I have no need of the General Administration.' And so everything remained as it was. The young Baron vom Stein declared in indignation that Frederick's *régie* had ruined the prestige of the Prussian Trade Department. Stein complained 'of the petty political tyrannies of the Prussian state,' and threatened that 'there was small probability of his remaining in the service of Prussia; he might perhaps decide to enter the service of Austria.' But at that time he was, like every one else, counting on the speedy retirement of the unprofitable occupant of the Prussian throne, and he immersed himself in the administration of mines, a department in which his respected chief, Heinitz, was subjected to less annoyance from the King."

Manfred continued: "The influence of Frederick's trade-restrictions on the development of trade not only in the Empire but even within the Prussian provinces was occasionally described by Frederick himself. I recall a passage in his testament of 1768, in which he says: 'We have in Silesia woollen goods, for which it was formerly possible to find a sale in Austria, and which are now rotting in our warehouses.' By 'formerly' should be understood: before the Silesian wars, which had been the beginning of his ruinous trade warfare not only against Austria but also against all his neighbours.

"You see, the great Goethe was concerned for his stocking-weavers and the great King for his woollen goods. What unity among the great ones of the Fatherland! That the concern of the King went even further than that of Goethe, that it even had recourse to penal measures, is confirmed by Preuss, the royal historiographer, in the following words (39):

"In 1766 the old prohibitions against wool-export were revived; on April 3rd, 1774, the export of wool and woollen hides was forbidden *under pain of death*. . . All these laws were very prejudicial to the sheep-farms, and although the

King forbade the latter to close down under pain of a fine of a thousand ducats, he could not prevent them from falling into ruin. The passion for system always closes men's minds to the teaching of impartial history; otherwise there could have been no lack of instructive examples. The English parliament, for instance, once forbade the export of wool, which was frequently shipped to Antwerp. Thereby the farmer lost the hope of a good market for his wares; he reduced his flocks; and the prohibition was tacitly annulled. But Frederick did not do this. . . . Yet Prussian sheep-rearing was formerly prosperous. . . . When in Prussia, for higher ends' " (*i.e.* thanks to Napoleon), " 'the state of subjection was abolished and freedom of trade restored, there sprang into life too . . . in 1810, a more beneficent customs-and-excise administration, and, among other things, the export of wool was sanctioned. . . . What wonder if the quantity and quality of the wool now underwent a vast improvement, with a view to securing those prizes which were made available by the continually growing demand! Thus in the year 1828 England took over twenty-three million pounds of wool from Germany. . . . Yes, we begin to be concerned for the sale of our wool; we are producing it in continually increasing quantity and finer quality, and we are finding more and more competitors in markets, whose number and importance increases every year; so that already we may indulge the hope that, as the well-being of the lower classes of our population improves, we may ourselves be in a position to consume our wool.'

" Thus Preuss confirms the mistakenness of the Frederician trade-restrictions just as honestly as does the King in his testament, to which he confides that his woollen goods are 'rotting in our warehouses.' While Frederick was compelled to make such admissions to himself, outsiders, who had seen more of trade and its conditions than was possible in Prussia or in Luchesi's Italy, were, if possible, still more severe in their judgment. Five years later (1773) the English ambassador, for instance, reported to his Government (40): 'He is doubtless ambitious of becoming a commercial power, and at intervals is convinced that this never can be without previously encouraging

trade by taking off those fetters with which it is universally clogged throughout his dominions ; at the same time, however, he will never be able to persuade himself to forego the advantages which he obtains from these restrictions and from the chicanery with which its officers execute them. Immediate gain, however small, will always preponderate with him. His principles on this subject are so extremely false, so exceedingly narrow, that I am convinced the result of his great acquisitions of coast, and numerous seaports, will only prove a detriment to others without ever being of any real benefit to himself. Every commercial enterprise from the beginning of his reign till this day has universally failed. . . .’

“Since Frederick the Great made considerable efforts (though without success) to establish a Prussian mercantile fleet, his remarks on shipping deserve to be heard. Lucchesini writes on September 13th, 1783 : ‘The mid-day meal lasted a long time, and various subjects were discussed. Towards the end the question of navigation was raised, and in this connection reference was made to the services which geometry and astronomy had rendered to that art. The King knows nothing of either, but tries to justify his ignorance by disparaging them, and consequently maintains that these sciences never rendered any service to navigation. In support of this erroneous notion, the King employed all kinds of artifices, and in fact proved clearly that he does not know even the meaning of the word navigation or the very elements of the sciences which he refuses to appreciate. . . . I made a few mild protests, and then deliberately held my tongue.’ Neither Lucchesini nor Goethe were at that time acquainted with the account which is now available of Frederick’s Emden sea-trip, when the King suddenly (like one of his successors) conceived himself as admiral, and began to interfere in the direction of the vessel. The captain upon whose sphere Frederick tried to encroach would not, however, let himself be talked down like the Minister, von Heinitz, but said to his new King with good-natured dignity : ‘Nay, Sir, you must keep still ; here I have to give the orders.’ It is clear from this Frisian spirit of resistance that Emden had at that date only been a very short time under Prussian rule and

perhaps why Frederick II. wanted in 1745 to sell this port to the English. 'Only their disinclination thwarted this project, which cannot but seem amazing to posterity.' If it amazes you too, I recommend to you Droysen's history of Prussian politics. (41)

"If at first Goethe was perhaps loth to believe all the miscellaneous information concerning Frederick II.'s economic policy imparted to him by his new acquaintance, Lucchesini, he will not have lacked subsequent opportunities of verifying what he had heard.

"From Mirabeau's seven-volume work on the Prussian monarchy, which utterly condemned Frederick's whole economic policy, Goethe, the Minister of State, was soon after to learn, not without a smile, that Frederick II., together with his excellent Herzberg, estimated the proceeds of the industry of the Prussian State at 40 million taler, and was deluded enough to believe that of this sum only five million was derived from agriculture, and the remaining 35 million from his beloved and tariff-protected 'manufactures'."

Hegemann: "There you speak of a Frederick whom I do not know and who horrifies me. There must be some misunderstanding. You cannot ask me to accept the judgment of an English ambassador or of an Italian like Lucchesini or a Frenchman like Mirabeau as authoritative in regard to the merits of Frederick's economic policy."

Manfred: "If you reject the unanimous opinion of contemporary foreigners, if the opinion of the Barons vom Stein and von Heinitz makes as little impression on you as the account of the Prussian wool export given by the historiographer Preuss, you can on the other hand hardly insist that more than a pathological value be ascribed to the panegyrics of present-day Berlin professors. I therefore present to you not a Prussian but a German and indeed a particularly inoffensive witness, namely, a woman. Yes, a female witness, a Danzig woman, the mother of Schopenhauer, who was an admirer of the great King, and who wrote her *Reminiscences* after the wars of liberation, at a time when admiration of Frederick had become the regular thing. It is generally easier to admire at a temporal distance."

Manfred took up an old volume, turned over the leaves for a moment and continued: "After Johanna Schopenhauer has described the flourishing Danzig of her youth, its prosperity and its civil and religious freedom, she refers to the events after 1772:

" 'One day the Prussians came, and misfortune seized like a vampire on my unfortunate native city, and for years sucked out its lifeblood until it was completely exhausted. . . .' This is the testimony of Johanna Schopenhauer, and she continues: 'Although the free city of Danzig was only conditionally subject to Polish protection, by far the largest part of her territory was none the less torn from her. By a ghastly irony of fate she alone was exempted from the violent seizure of the surrounding territory. As if in mockery, the free and once so mighty Hanseatic town was allowed to retain her ancient republican constitution, while the source of her prosperity was diverted and gradually ran dry. . . .

" 'The port, together with the adjacent territory, was occupied by Prussia, while the entirely superfluous fortress of Weichselmünde was left to the town. Hardly half an hour distant from the outermost gate the Prussian eagle was set up over night, and a few steps further, at the beginning of the little hamlet of Langefuhr, which consisted almost entirely of the beautiful country-houses of well-to-do citizens, there stood the greatest abomination of all, the customs office, in which, through an inexplicable aberration on the part of the great King, the French *régie*, detested throughout Prussia, pursued its activities.

" 'At another gate, nearer to the city, in the midst of the outermost suburb, Schidlitz, the Prussian frontier began. . . .

" 'The anger of the citizens, in whom the feeling of their helplessness had kindled a despairing rage, was transformed after the first horror into a sullen wrath, into an ever deepening hatred against Prussia and everything Prussian, and, very soon, into the fixed determination to risk everything—their lives, their bodies and all they possessed—in the defence of the last wretched shadow of their former freedom which remained to them

“ ‘The bitter blows which fate has dealt us we are learning at length to bear with a kind of dull resignation, but we never cease to smart under those thousand trivial, daily recurring pinpricks, which pursue us as though in mockery, but never succeed in reducing us to patient subjection. The flagrant and remorseless petty tyrannies, which the French excise administration, especially in *Langefuhr*, committed every day, did perhaps more to intensify the bitterness against Prussia than all the other measures, which were gradually and utterly to destroy all the civic prosperity of this unhappy town.

“ ‘The insulting treatment to which the inhabitants of Danzig were exposed, without distinction of person, as soon as they passed beyond the frontier of their very restricted territory, must seem incredible in our far humaner age. Every foot-passenger was detained before the excise-buildings, and it was a great favour, if he was spared having his pockets searched, in order to make sure that he had nothing excisable on him.

“ ‘Carriages and hackney coaches were subjected to no less thorough a search than traders’ and peasants’ carts. Women and children were sometimes compelled to descend from their carriages in the pouring rain and amid the mocking jeers of their tormentors, until it pleased the latter to finish ransacking every cranny and corner of the vehicle.

“ ‘Then began the personal search. The then fashionable “posches” of the ladies, a kind of light farthingale, which in fact consisted of very capacious pockets, the contents of which it was quite impossible to see from outside, were a special object of suspicion to these French bullies. No lady dare refuse to empty out her pockets before their eyes, unless she were prepared to be subjected to the most insulting treatment. With servant-girls and women of the lower classes the behaviour of these impudent scoundrels was still more relentless.

“ ‘Even in their countryhouses, whether situated in *Langefuhr* itself or at a greater distance towards *Oliva*, the Danzig citizens were exposed to the ill-treatment of these ruffianly foreign excisemen. House-searchings for contraband, to resist which was to risk a heavy penalty, occurred daily, and ‘coffee-scenters,’ so named from their honourable office, sniffed about

in the farms, houses and kitchens for the odour of freshly roasted coffee, it being forbidden to sell any but already roasted coffee within the Prussian frontiers.

“ ‘As a result of all this, the general bitterness both against the French *régie* and against the great King, who by the right of the stronger inflicted this intolerable treatment upon us, was inflamed to the utmost. Soon after the occupation I was myself unfortunately compelled to witness the terrible outbreaks of ungovernable wrath and ferocity to which a naturally good-tempered people can be driven, and the fearful memory of it for a long time pursued me waking and sleeping.

“ ‘Insolent presumption, for no other motive is conceivable for such a purposeless audacity, from time to time induced the French excisemen to make their way into the city and secretly to fasten up new Royal Prussian Decrees on the Town Hall, which, as soon as they were perceived, were immediately torn down by the mob, infuriated at the mere sight of the Prussian eagle.

“ ‘Rendered too bold by repeated success, two of these wretches allowed themselves to be caught in the performance of such an exploit, and were in a moment surrounded by a raging mob. Bellowing like ocean-waves lashed by the storm, the populace streamed in from all sides ; armed with paving-stones and sticks, a thousand threatening arms were raised, and, amid savage curses and shouts of execration, there rang out from a thousand throats the sentence of death on the objects of their detestation. Only a precipitous flight could save them. Bleeding from his many wounds, the fleet-footed of the two finally succeeded in taking refuge in the chief Guard Station, where his pursuers desisted from the chase. Like a hunted stag, harassed by a pack of hounds, his companion was meanwhile being mercilessly pursued through half the town, through streets and alleys, in desperate flight, amid a hail of stones. Only the increasing numbers of his pursuers, who finally in the narrow streets became wedged into a solid mass, prevented them from seizing him.

“ ‘I saw this wretched creature, bellowing, howling from mortal fear and pain, covered with blood, the remnants of his garments fluttering about him in tatters. In close pursuit the

raging mob rushed past our house. He stumbled from exhaustion, but quickly recovered his footing, and only in the next street was he finally overtaken by the fate which he was trying in vain to elude.

“ ‘I have neither the power nor the wish to describe further that horrible sight. Unrevenged and unpitied the unhappy man met his end in the most literal sense of the term, amid the blows and the jeers of a populace smarting from its injuries and now roused to the most savage retaliation. They wanted and they had their victim, and any attempt to wrest that victim from them would have been as vain as it would probably have been dangerous.

“ ‘The pleasant summerhouses in Langefuhr, Stuess and Silva stood for a long time deserted, their owners preferring at first to dispense with their accustomed summer sojourns rather than expose themselves to such shameful treatment. . . .’

“ But Johanna Schopenhauer continues :

“ ‘If Doctor Faust made a pact with the Evil One and was none the less, as Goethe tells us, after his death borne up by the angels to eternal blessedness, one may pardon the Danzig owners of country residences, if they so far demeaned themselves as to engage in negotiations with the French *Régie*, which was certainly not less hated than the devil himself, with the result that, in return for a not inconsiderable annual payment, they were able to purchase exemption from excise for the period of their sojourn, and so a great obstacle to their enjoyment was removed. Now every one who could possibly contrive it made his way to the open country from which he had so long been cut off, and my mother too planned, in accordance with her usual custom, to go with us children for the hottest part of the summer to a pleasant little summerhouse in the suburb of Schidlitz. Joyfully we set out, but oh how changed we found it all ! Close beside the lawn planted with trees in front of the house, which had been our favourite playground, there stretched slantwise across the road a black-and-white striped turnpike, an object of universal detestation ; for our house was the last in Danzig territory. Almost opposite was the Chief Guard House, and next to it was the hated Excise



Office. On the grass square separated from us only by a low hedge, we saw recruits being exercised from morning to night amid oaths and insults and blows, and before the Chief Guard House we saw the whips of junior officers descend on the backs of old soldiers. That time is past and will never return, but at that time flogging was the order of the day, in accordance with the spirit of the old Prussian military system, which has now, thank Heaven! been banished. The thundering 'Relieve!' of the Guards hourly conjured up bitter memories, and in the evening we witnessed with deep compassion the ill-treatment which the poor Cassubians, bringing timber and provisions to the Danzig market on their little carts spanned with oxen, had to endure from the French excisemen. 'What is that strange, terrible noise?' asked my mother one morning. 'Honoured mistress,' answered the gardener, 'it is a running the gauntlet in the field behind our garden. God have mercy on the poor fellow! He is running three times for life or death. Next Friday it will be his comrade's turn, and he will fare no better; they tried to desert.'

"'On the evening of the same day we were back in the Heiligengeistgasse, and we never felt any desire to go back to our little summerhouse.' This is what Johanna Schopenhauer, the friend of Goethe, has to say of the Prussian soldiery and the Frederician excise-policy in practice. Suppose that by some inconceivable misfortune Danzig fell into the hands of the Russians or the Poles, is it conceivable that these new rulers would be guilty of one-hundredth part of the abominations practised by the Prussians under the direction of their most wise and omnipotent King?'"

Hegemann: "What you have just read is terrible, but is it not probable that Johanna Schopenhauer let herself be carried away by feminine emotion into giving an exaggerated description of a painful transition-period?"

Manfred: "Hardly. The papers that she left contain some almost more heart-rending descriptions of the subsequent period. Here is an example: 'More and more cruelly and destructively, the pressure of an alien and despotic power began in the course of years to produce its effects upon the

former prosperity of my unfortunate native city, Danzig.' What took place is clear. Take Paul Schrader's *History of the Royal Sea Trading Company*, (42) that famous foundation of Frederick II., and you may read there: 'The special motive with which the Sea Trading Company was founded was to get the trade with Poland into the hands of Prussia, and to eliminate Danzig.' If only the stagnation of Danzig had at least brought prosperity to Prussian sea trade, as, for instance, after 1719 the Trieste Sea Trading Company of the German Emperor became the 'rival and soon the heir of a decaying Venice' (43), and as the Imperial Trading Company in Ostend flourished to the annoyance of the English. But on sea too that Frederician petty tyranny and ineptitude stigmatised by the ambassador, Lord Malmesbury, made itself fatally evident. Frederick II.'s Sea Trading Company, which had boastfully guaranteed ten per cent. to its shareholders, was in fact continually on the verge of bankruptcy, 'although,' says Dr. Schrader, 'Frederick the Great always displayed a special personal interest in the prosperity of sea trade.' He would have perhaps been more correct if he had used the word 'because' instead of 'although.' In any case, he continues: 'In spite of many privileges and exemptions, the expected favourable financial results were not forthcoming, the main reason for this being that Frederick the Great was very unfortunate in his choice of the principal officials entrusted with the administration. Among the mistakes due to Frederick II.'s ignorance of men the most striking was his choice of the Minister of State, von Goerne, as president of this institution'. Regarding this typical Frederician official Schrader writes: 'On account of the defalcations of which he was proved guilty, von Goerne was in the year 1782 sentenced to confiscation of his property and to lifelong imprisonment in a fortress.' For eight years previous to this Goerne had been free to pursue his activities, and there are said to be still people in Berlin at the present day who long for the return of these profitable Frederician bank scandals." (44)

Hegemann: "You cannot, however, describe such a criminal as Goerne as a typical Frederician official!"

Manfred Ellis reflected a moment and then answered : " Yes, you are probably right. Goerne was not a foreigner ! When Frederick II. was free to choose, when, that is to say, he was not hampered by the standing claims of his aristocracy, he gladly and shamelessly gave rein to his natural predilection for the fraudulent windbags, bankrupts and adventurers from foreign countries, whom he loved to take into his service. You will have no trouble in finding innumerable proofs of this. Even if you consult the semi-official works of Preuss, you will find plenty of statements such as the following : ' There were also Frenchmen at the head of the postal administration. But the French heads of the post office were not to remain there long. Already on December 22nd, 1766, Moret was obliged to leave Berlin in twenty-four hours on account of his shameful behaviour ; his successor, Edème Guiard, was removed in 1767 ; Bernard took refuge in flight from a judicial investigation.' (45) Or with reference to the great King as tobacco-trader : ' . . . when the King on May 4th, 1765, established a monopoly of the tobacco trade, for the lease of which Franz Lazarus Roubaud, a bankrupt Marseilles merchant, and the Italian, Johann Anton v. Calzabigi paid a million taler : but it could not be maintained, so great were the restrictions on the buyers and the planters.' (46)

" Possibly Frederick II.'s grotesque predilection for foreigners is simply due to the fact that in one's own country the queer rabble, to which he was so invincibly attracted, is nowhere to be found in such an unadulterated variety as in the foreign countries in which they take refuge. In France a bankrupt Frenchman was of small account ; in Berlin he was passionately desired by Frederick in order to blow the bubbles of the King's commercial romanticism. If you have any doubt that there was a screw loose in old Fritz, listen to the following semi-official account of the Fritzian *Régie*, and you will understand the unspeakable resentment which finds vent in Johanna Schopenhauer's description of Danzig, and you will also understand that, while Frederick II. could force his crazy amateur adventures in public finance upon his subjects, who had been enslaved for some hundred years, he could only rouse the most

bitter wrath in a population which, like the German inhabitants of Danzig, had until recently been free.

"In Frederick's royal decree of April 9th, 1766, we find: 'In consideration of the unsatisfactory and irregular manner in which the excise business has up to date been conducted, we, the All-Highest, have been induced, in order to put an end to the fraudulent acts that have been committed, to send for farmers from France, to take over the administration of the same.'

"And now the pious Preuss gives the following charitable explanation: '... When France, as a result of her bad financial administration, was already in a very bad way, whole crowds of financial officers found their way from that country to ours, some of them under very droll names: *directeurs, inspecteurs, vérificateurs, contrôleurs, visitateurs, commis, plombeurs, contrôleurs ambulants, jaugeurs, commis rats de cave*, and brigades of *anticontribandiers* on foot and on horseback, who made the most severe and arbitrary searches all over the country. Thus arose the '*Administration générale des Accises et Péages*,' generally known as the *Régie*, at the head of which were five *régisseurs*: Le Grand de Cressy, who died in February 1766, and whose successor, de Lattre, in the same year stabbed the *régisseur*, Trablaine de Candy, in a duel, La Haye de Launay, Brière and de Pernety, with whom the King concluded a six-years' contract, under which each of these five men was to receive an annual salary of 12,000 taler, as well as considerable premiums on any excess of the revenues from excise dues over those for the year 1765-66; they were further to have the title of Privy Financial Councillor. . . . The Westphalian provinces, however, in response to numerous appeals from the inhabitants, were, shortly after the introduction of the *Régie*, exempted from this new administration. . . .'

"The western provinces, which had protested, not entirely without success, against the ignominy of the Frederician slave-hunting, known as recruiting, were also excluded from Frederick's experiments in public finance. Preuss analyses the results of these experiments, and comes to the conclusion: 'Thus the *Régie* furnished no substantial cash compensation

for the many oppressions which these aliens inflicted upon the people, for the embezzlements of customs and excise revenues which they perpetrated and for the wounded pride of the Prussian people, since (as Hamann wrote to Jacobi) "the State declared all its subjects to be incapable of conducting its financial administration, and, instead, confided to a band of ignorant ruffians its life-blood, the purse of its subjects".'

"Pray do not forget that this is not taken from any anti-Frederician pamphlet, but from the principal work of the official historiographer of the Prussian State. (47)

"The King indeed was thoroughly well satisfied with his *Régie* escapades. With the enthusiasm of a schoolboy who has discovered a new toy, he wrote on March 16th, 1766, to the French adventurers whom he had allowed to bamboozle him: 'For the rest, your plan is excellent, and we will set ourselves stoutly to work this afternoon to put everything in order. You will both have the honour of having brought light, order and clarity into this chaos. I look upon Messieurs de la Haye and Candy as two jupiters who have happily effected its unravelling.'

"Only after this kind of 'blundering' and 'starving of the stocking-weavers' had been going on for eighteen years, did Frederick II. himself begin to have doubts concerning his 'jupiters'; and on December 1st, 1784, he wrote like a disappointed schoolboy whose toy has broken in half: 'in view of the complaints of the late General Inspector Pagan against the General Excise administration . . . that they, the French, are a pack of scoundrels, they can be driven out . . . I am in fact seriously thinking that I will try to shake myself gradually free of all Frenchmen and be rid of them.' This wisdom came to him after he had been reigning forty-four years. The patient Prussians had barely two more years to wait before death came to rid them of their great King, the extortions of the French *Régie*, the Frenchman at its head (he was immediately dismissed) and most of the other Frenchmen. But Lucchesini, Frederick II.'s Italian confidant, was retained in a place of honour, and was able to pursue energetically Frederick II.'s policy of subjection to France and indemnification in Poland."

Hegemann: "I repeat that Frederick cannot be held responsible for Prussia's excessive acquisitions of Polish territory, which was difficult to assimilate."

Manfred Ellis: "And I repeat that Frederick II., by his blindly vindictive attacks on German trade, and, above all, on the trade of German Danzig, destroyed all possibility of the assimilation of any considerable Polish acquisitions."

It was quite evident to me that Manfred had for some time lost interest in the continuance of this discussion, and I should myself have gladly brought it to an end, had not a fatal curiosity and the hope of proving Manfred's view to be erroneous, induced me to persevere. I therefore replied once more as follows: "You overwhelm me with quotations, which I am unable to verify. I have no weapons with which to retort, but you have not yet succeeded in convincing me."

Manfred saw that I took the matter to heart, and replied very good-naturedly: "I can understand that you are surprised at my description of the trade-policy of the much-extolled Frederick II., and that you feel it necessary to make sure whether I have drawn an impartial picture. There comes to my mind an essay in the *Legal, Administrative and Economic Annals of the German Empire*. Under the year 1905 you will find an account of the Prussian Sea Trading Company. Perhaps the author, Dr. Arthur Nussbaum, will convince you."

And Manfred read out the following from the stout volume of the *Annals*, which he held in his hand:

"The two last decades of the reign of Frederick the Great were, as we know, consecrated to the economic rehabilitation of the Prussian state, which had been reduced to the last point of exhaustion by the previous wars. . . . Truly the economic organisation did not prove as submissive as a regiment of soldiery in the hands of its commander. . . . Moreover Frederick II. was far from fortunate in his financial enterprises. . . . Already in 1750 a commercial company for trade with Eastern Asia had been brought into existence under his aegis, through the agency of which it was hoped by the enthusiasts that Emden would be transformed into a second Bruges or Antwerp. This hope was, to be sure, very soon shattered. . . . One of the few economic

creations of Frederick the Great which has been preserved down to the present day is the *Seehandlung*, and even this was only able to survive its founder because it later pursued a different course than that which had been intended when it was founded. . . . In accordance with the project of a M. de Lattre, Frederick the Great conferred on the Sea Trading Company the monopoly of the import of Spanish, English and French salt . . . and a 'staple-right' for wax (at that time the principal means of illumination). . . . The point of the staple-right was directed mainly against the free city of Danzig.' The salt-monopoly was directed against the Austro-Polish salt-mining works in Galicia. But the Great King was not satisfied with injuring Danzig, Poland, Austria; he also proceeded remorselessly against his own subjects. Dr. Nussbaum continues: 'Scarcely had the *Seehandlung* come into existence, when it became involved in serious disputes with the merchants of Königsberg and Memel . . . whose sea trade had been seriously injured by the salt-monopoly. For foreign ships which had salt on board now had to touch at other ports—in particular, Riga and Libau—and, on the other hand, the Poles ceased to procure their salt from the Prussian towns, where it had become far too expensive owing to the salt-monopoly. To the merchants, therefore, the Sea Trading enterprise represented a continual encroachment upon their privileges, and, supported by von Domhardt, the Governor of East Prussia, they were energetic in opposing it, to the extreme annoyance of the King. . . . Under the management of de Lattre, the *Seehandlung* worked at a very heavy loss. In 1774 de Lattre was implicated in criminal proceedings, and in 1775 was obliged to make a hasty return to France. The minister Horst, who was jointly responsible, was removed in 1774.' Instructed by experience, the great King succeeded in finding a man after his own heart, a man full of political ambition and free from scruples, and this time a German! Nussbaum goes on: 'To succeed de Lattre the King selected the minister von der Goerne, whose official activities form a still sadder chapter in the history of the institution. From the outset he proceeded, as Frederick the Great expressed it, "very wildly." The King therefore kept

a sharp eye on Goerne. But Goerne used the credit of the Seehandlung for his private ends . . . in order to buy up the estates of the Polish nobility and thus make himself a large landowner in Poland. It was rumoured that he had designs on the crown of Poland, and that he had already established "a mounted and infantry guard, a court and a council." When the misdoings of Goerne came to light, the King dealt with him with the utmost rigour, and in 1782 had proceedings instituted against him in the higher court, as a result of which Goerne was sentenced to lifelong imprisonment. Owing to the defalcations—1,400,000 taler—the Seehandlung became insolvent, and in 1786 there was talk of closing it down.' The same year, however, witnessed the death of the sage of Sanssouci; the Seehandlung (and a good deal else) could therefore be reorganised and continue its existence."

When Manfred laid aside the *Annals of the German Empire*, from which he had read, I sighed: "The great King certainly had persistent ill-luck."

Manfred: "Possibly. Or possibly he was himself to blame. This was at any rate the opinion of Baron vom Stein: 'In exoneration of Goerne, who suffered such a precipitous fall, Stein asserted that Goerne, before he began to commit his misdemeanours, had been imprisoned for two years, though he was innocent!'" (48)

Manfred was about to give an account of vom Stein's views on the League of Princes, when we were interrupted by the entry of Cornelius Gurlitt, of Dresden, who at that time was studying Neapolitan baroque art and the great de Dominici's historical forgeries. When I mentioned that Manfred had questioned the beneficent influence of Frederick II. on the solution of the Germano-Polish question, Gurlitt made some remarks, which, in spite of all the reserve which he maintained towards a non-German, practically amounted to an addition to the list of the sins of the great King. Gurlitt suggested that the great aim of the German penetration of Poland, the supreme importance of which was so persistently emphasised by Gustav Freytag, had been irretrievably frustrated, chiefly owing to the terribly disastrous policy of Frederick II. As Gurlitt subsequently



discussed this question in detail in his two-volume work on *Augustus the Strong*, (49) I may as well quote from this book. Speaking of the decisive importance of the Polish question in connection with Germany's position as a central power, Gurlitt mentioned incidentally :

"As a result of the election (to the Polish throne in 1697), Augustus the Strong became ruler of a kingdom which exceeded Germany in size, beginning near the Oder and extending beyond the Dnieper from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Poland occupied the road to the East, to a world alien to Europeans. The hope of becoming ruler of the Polish nation could not but kindle in an active brain youthful dreams of performing the exploits described in the romances of the period."

Manfred intervened : "Oh, as regards these dreams, Augustus the Strong soon found himself in distinguished company. In the Christmas of 1775 Goethe wrote to his duke from the forester's house near Waldeck : ' . . . I dreamed the whole night of armies in movement, all tired out with running, and especially of a journey from Switzerland to Poland, which I made in order to see and serve under Marshal Saxe, who in my dream was still living.' Curious, it seems never to have occurred to Goethe even in a dream to serve under Frederick the Great ? On the other hand, Goethe dreamed and liked dreaming a great many sensible things. In particular, he seems to have had a much clearer notion than, for instance, Frederick the Great of the necessity for new colonial territory. Indeed he himself thought seriously of emigrating to the colonies, as is evident not only from his *Wilhelm Meister*, but above all from his plans of flight to America with Lili."

Gurlitt suggested that Goethe only began to think of the American West after Germany's natural extension towards the East had been rendered for ever impossible by the misguided Polish policy of Frederick II. Gurlitt says in his book :

"Augustus the Strong was able to rely (for the realisation of his Polish ambitions) on his physical energy, on the glamour of his presence, on his power of attracting men to himself, on the loyalty of his Saxons and on their increasing prosperity. He could hope for the support of the Emperor, who was urging him

to accept the crown ; he was mindful of his duty, as a Prince of the Empire, to render faithful service to the Emperor ; and he believed that other German princes also would recognise his exploit to be consistent with the aims of their own people. . . . The East worked on the imaginations of the German states, then in process of industrial and capitalistic development, as did the colonies on the seafaring powers. And it was one of their leading political aspirations to acquire outside their frontiers a territory in which they could reserve for themselves the right of marketing, the right of exclusion and the regulation of imports and exports. . . . The Polish clergy and with them the Pope refused to support a heretic aspirant to the crown of Poland (that is, Augustus the Strong), one of those dissenters, to fight against whom was looked upon by the Polish Catholics as a patriotic duty. . . . I have yet to discuss the influence upon Saxon Protestants of the conversion of Augustus to Catholicism. . . . He maintained, though he did not maintain it openly like Frederick the Great, that every man can find salvation after his own fashion. . . . The number of German immigrants, particularly from Saxony, increased (in Poland) ; they settled almost exclusively in the towns, where they regained an influence on the administration and reintroduced a high standard of craftsmanship."

Manfred intervened : " For the Saxons in particular the great Frederick had no use whatever. When in 1766 he was explaining to Solms, his ambassador at St. Petersburg, why Prussia must ally herself with the Russians and only with the Russians, but on no account with the Saxons, he added a postscript to his letter : ' Above all, no Saxons ! . . . these are sacramental words ' (*Point de Saxons . . . ce sont des paroles sacramentales* !). (50) Perhaps he did not want Saxony as an ally, because in 1766 he still had hopes of some day conquering Saxony ? Was there a prospect of another Seven Years' War ? That should delight Max Lehmann and Hans Delbrück."

Gurlitt went on : " When the Saxon rule ended in Poland, the Germans had built up a prosperous civilian population, and a Polish middle class similar to that of Western Europe was beginning to form. The towns were utterly transformed by

Saxon industry and artistic skill. Once Warsaw was a small town composed of German settlers; later, after it had been polonised, it became subject mainly to Italian influence. Now, however, under Augustus, it became a great city with a royal residence, a vigorous industrial life and a flourishing population. The two Saxon kings laid the foundation for the cultural development of Poland, which was then completed under their successor, Stanislaus Lesczinski, and which even the partition of the country could not quite destroy. . . . Poland was ruled by Saxon kings for sixty-six years, namely from 1697 until the death of Augustus III. in 1763. This Saxon sovereignty was brought to an end, not through any internal difficulties, but through the Prussian policy of Frederick the Great, the intrigues of France, the thirst for power of Russia, Austria and Prussia, and the national disintegration of the country itself. Napoleon I. and the German victory over Russia in the World War were responsible for its attempted restoration. . . . When Augustus the Strong died, he could, however, look with some satisfaction upon what had been achieved, and could hope that the House of Wettin would gradually obtain a firm hold of the Polish crown. Then came Frederick the Great, and destroyed the increasing influence of the German race in Poland by reducing Saxony to impotence, an error of policy from the point of view of the interests of the German people as a whole, which has only recently been appreciated to the full. Russia now had the road open to Warsaw, and the way was prepared for Slav domination. Prussia was unable to pursue that eastern policy which had been Germany's ancient pride and had since the middle ages lain in the hands of Prussia and Austria. If one wishes to arrive at a more correct estimate of Frederick's world policy, this fact must be chalked up against it. Saxony did a great cultural work in Poland, but in vain, since in Berlin not a German but a Prussian policy was pursued."

After these words of Cornelius Gurlitt, Manfred said: "From the Oder to the Dnieper, from the Baltic to the Black Sea. An empire like the American West! Accessible to Germany from German Danzig and German Dresden! No other country in Western Europe had her colonies so con-

veniently situated just at her doors! Who frustrated these magnificent possibilities? Bismarck said on December 20th, 1870, that Frederick II. was the first Hohenzollern who did not understand any Polish. The question whether anything could be achieved by force was moreover seriously considered by the son of Augustus the Strong, the Marshal of Saxony. From what Goethe, when he was twenty-six years of age, relates of his Polish dreams, we may conclude that he was filled with enthusiasm for the *Military Dreamings*, which Maurice of Saxony wrote in 1732 in thirteen sleepless nights, and which were published in 1751 after Maurice's death. In this book the Marshal worked out an exact plan for making his father, Augustus the Strong, or his step-brother, hereditary rulers of Poland, by means of two campaigns without a single battle. Frederick II., however, not only saw to it that Poland remained a semi-barbarous electoral kingdom and that Saxony lost the Polish throne, but he also obstructed the German trade of Danzig—in virtue of which he is admired throughout Prussia as a Polish coloniser. Danzig, however, with all the infinite wealth of her hinterland met the fate of the Sleeping Beauty, and has not yet, like Antwerp (for the shackling of which Frederick II.—little suspecting!—founded the League of Princes), found a rescuer to rouse her from the slumber into which she had been lulled by Frederick."

As I was afraid that Manfred might enumerate other Frederickian atrocities, such as Johanna Schopenhauer had reported from Danzig, I tried to bring back the conversation to Baron vom Stein. But Cornelius Gurlitt very considerably began to talk of de Dominici, who in 1743, by the most grotesque forgery, succeeded in hoaxing all the historians in regard to Neopolitan affairs for almost a century and a half. Manfred remarked: "De Dominici would have deserved that Frederick II. should make him patron saint of Berlin University, had there been a university in Frederick's capital before the stimulating influence of Napoleon's visit." When Gurlitt had left, I inquired once more regarding the League of Princes.

# GOETHE'S DIPLOMATIC CAMPAIGN AGAINST FREDERICK II., THE LEAGUE OF PRINCES AND THE LOSS OF BELGIUM

Manfred : "Yes, I was just now about to tell you how curiously the Baron vom Stein was implicated in Frederick II.'s League-of-Princes 'buffoonery'."

Hegemann : "'Buffoonery!' I must really protest. Only yesterday I read in the *Deutsche Tageszeitung* (51) that the League of Princes represents Frederick's abandonment of a Prussian for a German national policy!"

Manfred : "Excuse me! I borrowed the expression 'buffoonery' from Ernst Moritz Arndt, whose patriotism I have hitherto looked upon as more trustworthy than the *Deutsche Tageszeitung*. Arndt says in *The Spirit of the Age* : 'The same old Frederick, the wise and just, who here cried out upon force (in the Bavarian succession question), had recently divided Poland, which but for him would have remained undivided. The League of Princes was also merely a political buffoonery directed against Austria, without patriotic enthusiasm or any real bond of loyalty or necessity'."

The name of Arndt, in mentioning which Manfred handed me a small first edition of the year 1806, left me dumbfounded. But Manfred continued with complete unconcern :

"That is a train of thought which leads us back to the faithful Lucchesini. His Neapolitan meeting with Goethe is especially significant, because Lucchesini had just been in close touch with Frederick II., and because he met Goethe just after the latter had finally failed in his bold political enterprise against Frederick's extravagances."

Hegemann : "Goethe's political enterprise against Frederick the Great! My brain whirls!"

Manfred : "Yes, that is usually passed over in silence in Prussia. I was talking not long ago to a famous Berlin professor of Germanic lore, who declared that he had never yet heard of it (and another Berlin professor, Ranke, maintains an equally discreet silence on this point). And yet the Jena professor,

Ottokar Lorenz, some time ago delivered a long lecture on it to the Goethe Society, (52) and Bielchowsky gives the principal points of this 'conspiracy,' as it was dubbed by Boisseré after a conversation with Goethe. Yes, in 1778 and 1779, when Frederick again took the field against the German Emperor, and at the same time sent his hussars to Weimar to press recruits into the Prussian service, Goethe was Minister of War at Weimar. 'Has he a hundred thousand men?' asked Frederick II. one day of a malcontent. Goethe's army consisted of only six hundred men, but he felt bitterly the shame and outrage of being forced by Frederick into a civil war, and he complained as loudly as he dared to his duke, Charles Augustus, of the shamefulness of this demand. Forty years later the duke heard Baron vom Stein, who ventured to speak more plainly, express his opinion as follows on the recruiting of soldiers outside the sovereign's own domain: 'Any one who should venture on such a beating up of recruits in England or France would be immediately seized, and would have to atone for it with his person and his money, as well as being thrown for two or three years into a dungeon where no ray of light from sun or moon ever penetrated.' Frederick's own betrothal to an English princess was partly prevented by the fact that the 'soldier king, in consequence of forcible recruiting in Hanover, had reason to expect a declaration of war from the English King, George II.' (53) As regards Frederick's recruiting officers, whom it was not practicable to fling into a dungeon, Goethe further apprehended: 'By dint of cunning and secret violence they will take away a large number of the flower of our youth.' Possibly he thought, like Egmont: 'To bow the neck beneath this yoke or to lay one's head upon the block is all one to a noble spirit.' In any case he drafted the plan of a league of the minor princes against the encroachments of Frederick. The Duke, Charles Augustus—if Bielchowsky is rightly informed—looked upon 'the League as a means for the regeneration of the whole fatherland and for the revival of its almost extinguished public spirit and its profoundly diminished collective strength.' Goethe's collaborators were his friends, Wilhelm von Edelsheim, Dalberg and others. Edelsheim was the Baden

minister, of whom Goethe said : ' I do not know a wiser man,' and Dalberg was later to become chancellor of the German Empire. From early times at every imperial coronation the herald had to call out : Is no Dalberg there ? Whereupon the Dalberg present was dubbed a knight by the newly crowned Emperor. Edelsheim drew up, in collaboration with Goethe, the memorable fourteen points upon which the new League was to agree and from which those concerned hoped great things. Dalberg was particularly zealous ' that the League of Princes should be a League of the Emperor and the Empire.' These are his own words, and I can imagine that Goethe, son of an imperial city, who had in 1765 witnessed with youthful enthusiasm the coronation of the Emperor who was still reigning in 1779, experienced an ardent sympathy for this loyal aspiration to serve the Emperor—and this not because he hoped ' that the Emperor would make him a baron '. (54) But Frederick II., who in the great game of diplomatic chess had been beaten by Kaunitz and the Pompadour, by the Russians and the English, was strong enough to checkmate Goethe and the minor princes. Their conspiracy was betrayed to Frederick. In 1785 Frederick's ambassador threw the Duke, Charles Augustus, ' into some embarrassment ' (so says Ranke himself) by requesting him ' to procure information concerning the prevailing views of the Princes of the Empire '. (55)

" It was reserved to Frederick to destroy a long-cherished dream of Leibniz, the ' Association of Friends of Germany ' : he had converted the Berlin Academy founded by Leibniz into an Association of Friends of France. Fate decreed that the King of Prussia should put a spoke in the wheel not only of Leibniz but also of Goethe. Lightly and promptly Frederick wrested the weapon, which had just been forged against his encroachments, from his puny opponents, Charles Augustus, Goethe and the other princelings. The beautiful fourteen points evaporated like soap-bubbles, and now begins the Prussian version of history !—Frederick the Great became in 1785 the glorious founder of the League of Princes ; but this League was not a League of the Emperor, but a League *against* the Emperor.

"Goethe must have seemed to himself rather ridiculous; he had spilt such a deal of ink to no purpose. That Goethe, for want of a confidential secretary, had with his own hand penned the voluminous secret documents of the conspiracy was even mentioned by Ranke, who passes over in silence these unpleasing origins of the 'League of Princes.' But Professor von Ranke would have done better to disregard Goethe even as a clerk, for Goethe revealed in *Egmont* what thoughts of revolt against the tyrants haunt the brains of such clerks: 'he shall not in any way exert, or even hint at or suggest, any power or despotic will against us'; so in *Egmont* declares the clerk Vansen, who about 1778 championed the 'constitution' and opposed the excesses of the Prince as eloquently as some ten years later a revolutionary orator in the garden of the Palais Royal in Paris.

"And please note by the way, but as something very significant, that Goethe shifted the speeches of the Belgian chancery clerk on behalf of liberty to the year 1568, that is to say, to the beginning of that fatal policy of the commercial thralldom of Belgium, which was legally established in 1648 by the Peace of Westphalia and which that far-sighted emperor Charles VI., and, above all, Joseph II. endeavoured to abolish; that thralldom of Belgium to secure the prolongation of which jealous England in 1725 made use of Frederick William I., and in 1785 of Frederick II. and the Frederician League of Princes 'buffoonery' (the same thralldom, which was later put an end to by the French Revolution and Napoleon, though only from 1792 to 1815). But the deeper significance of these things never of course penetrated beyond the high threshold of Frederick's intelligence. For him the League of Princes was only a 'buffoonery directed against Austria' and the predecessor of the Rhenish Confederation.

"An absurd misadventure befell Thomas Carlyle in the six volumes in which he expressed his admiration of Frederick II. without being fully cognisant of the nature of the material with which the Prussian augurs had agreed to clothe the Frederician nakedness. Carlyle innocently refers to the painful truth that the League of Princes, which Frederick of Prussia had shaped



into a weapon against the German Emperor, was the forerunner of the Napoleonic Rhenish Confederation. (That Goethe perceived this is evident from the last sentence of Müller's discourse on Frederick II. which Goethe condescended to translate into German.) At the present day even Koser, (56) Frederick's most intrepid admirer, admits (57) that 'a League which had its point directed against the Emperor had not existed in the Empire since Mazarin's Rhenish Confederation of 1658.' Hence Koser concludes (58) that Frederick's II.'s League against the Emperor was 'a great venture.' And of this not only the Berlin professors and the French, but, as I shall explain to you, the English also and in particular were gratefully convinced."

Manfred drew a deep breath and exclaimed: "Thus there came into being the 'German League.' Do you know that beautiful 'Hymn' in which Schubart extolled Frederick the Great from the safe retirement of his prison at Hohenasperg?"

I did not know it. Manfred continued: "The poem is so fine that I should like to read it to you, but it is too long. But at any rate listen how Schubart praises Frederick the Great as the founder of the League of Princes, and picture to yourself how the Prussian historians would rejoice if not Schubart, who was imprisoned by the pupil of Frederick and the torturer of Schiller, but Goethe had composed the following lines:

The Princes of Teutonia forced their way  
To Frederick's Felsenburg; whereon the giant  
Broods in his iron camp.  
They offered him their hands, proclaiming him  
Protector of their ancient rights. They said:  
"Be thou our leader, Friedrich Hermann!"  
And he agreed. So came the German League.

"Goethe, who had omitted to write anything in this strain, but, on the contrary, had objected to the 'black eagle's constant readiness to show its claws,' and Charles Augustus, in whose name the conspiracy against these claws had been woven, felt very uncomfortable. They were not imprisoned, like Schubart, nor did they, like Egmont, 'perish by the sword as a warning to all traitors,' but Goethe feared that 'everything had combined to plunge the duke into misfortune.' The duke, to be

sure, saved himself easily and promptly by complete subjection to the Prussian 'system'; that did not come hard to him: Goethe, who, as Minister of War, reduced the Weimar army from six hundred to three hundred men, often complained of 'our Princes' love of fighting' and of the 'military macaronis' of Charles Augustus. In July, 1786, Mirabeau discussed with Ferdinand of Brunswick, '*de la verve militaire et des fumées ambitieuses qui s'emparaient du Duc de Weymar, lequel aspirait à entrer au service de Prusse*'; as a reward Charles Augustus was soon after made Prussian Major-General. Goethe never submitted, and Ottokar Lorenz makes the interesting suggestion that Goethe's exit 'underground as it were' to Italy and his famous farewell letter to the Duke are partly to be explained by political considerations.

"From Verona Goethe wrote to the Duke: 'I have often felt a desire to know how matters were going in Berlin and how the *new* sovereign was conducting himself.' What could have been more interesting to Goethe at that time than to meet Lucchesini, the closest companion of the *old* sovereign and to receive from him intimate details regarding 'Frederick's Felsenburg'? Did Lucchesini, I wonder, in his conversation with Goethe, repeat the description which is to be found in his Italian diary under the date October 19th, 1780—thus at the very time in which Frederick's *Dissertation*, with the attack against Götz and Goethe, was made public. The picture given by Lucchesini in no way recalls Schubart's 'giant brooding in his iron camp'."

Manfred read from Lucchesini's diary: "'After the meal the King sent for me alone. I found him on a couch near the fire, surrounded by books and papers. He was dressed in a quilted red velvet jacket and a vest of gold and silver brocade.'

Hegemann: "You set my brain in a whirl with your quotations. I have always understood that the League of Princes was the masterstroke of Frederick's old age and the chief precursor of the Empire founded by Bismarck, because in 1785 Prussia for the first time entered into an alliance, not with the alien enemies of the German Empire, but with the German small states."

Manfred Ellis: "Yes, in the German schools and the *Deutsche Tageszeitung* they still repeat complacently Ranke's absurdities, although these have long been discarded even by the 'spiritual bodyguard of the Hohenzollerns,' to use the expression with which the Berlin professor, Du Bois-Reymond, proudly and correctly described his Berlin University. But, instead of relying upon the patriotic gibberish of these subalterns, I would suggest that you should rather speak of the League of Princes as did the great republican, Frederick II. himself. He said of his League of Princes: 'Germany is a kind of republic. It was in danger of losing its republican form; I was delighted to see the latter restored once more.' (59) Again and again Frederick insisted that he was defending the 'freedom,' the 'Germanic freedom' of the German princes against the 'despotism' of the German Emperor. The fact that he hoped to reap therefrom particularist advantages 'must be kept as secret as a murder,' he wrote to his brother Henry. (60)

"It is certainly true that Frederick did, in 1784, for the first time, feel compelled to bethink himself of German help. The result of his eternal rebellion against the Empire and of his fatally ill-judged foreign policy was described by Frederick himself on February 5th, 1784, to his confidant, Finckenstein, in the following words: 'We shall not find a single power that will offer us even the shadow of an alliance, let alone a real alliance'."

Hegemann: "Had not Frederick an alliance with Russia?"

Manfred: "You mean that Frederick II. ought at least to have reaped some advantage from his vassalage to Russia? No, he was satisfied with the humiliations. And it was entirely his own fault. He was incapable of understanding Catherine, who was his superior in every respect. This Empress, still known as 'the great,' tried very prudently to bring about an agreement between Germany and Russia in regard to the Balkans, which had not at that time any national cohesion; and she asked the German Emperor 'how much of the Turkish territory he wanted to keep for himself.'"

"As she still underestimated the perversity with which

Frederick II. resisted any addition to the power of Germany, she proposed to him that he for his part should indemnify himself in Poland. But Frederick could not grasp the situation; he held to the fixed idea, which ruled his whole life—hostility to the German Emperor. ‘In order to strengthen his defensive (!) position against Austria, he planned the inclusion of the Sublime Porte in the Prusso-Russian alliance’; these are the words of Koser, and he goes on: ‘Catherine was emphatic in the expression of her disapproval. . . . Nevertheless, Frederick, clinging with a certain obstinacy, one might almost say with infatuation, to a cherished idea, broached the question whether Russia would have any objection to a separate defensive alliance between Prussia and the Porte. Again the Russian representative intimated Catherine’s strong disinclination.’ Koser, who gives this account, (61) considers the ‘great’ king a subtle politician.”

Hegemann: “Does not all that confirm what I have already insisted, namely, that Frederick observed a wise moderation in the acquisition of Polish territory, even when it was offered to him?”

Manfred: “No, it merely confirms that Frederick II. considered any extension of German power as an evil to be resisted more stoutly than any other. For when he found that he was unable to stir up Catherine—who at that time secured the Crimea and Kuban for Russia—against the enterprising German Emperor, to whom she offered equally invaluable new territory, he wrote the following memoir with his own hand (19, xii. 1782): ‘If there is no hope of saving Turkey, the attempt must be made, by means of military demonstrations in the rear of the Russians and the Austrians (that is to say, stabs in the back of the Emperor who enlarged the German Empire) to obtain for Prussia compensation in Poland.’ (Now, therefore, he proposed to fight for new Polish territory, which if he had shown a little more insight earlier, he could have obtained without it.)

“Thus does Koser (62) interpret Frederick II.’s desire for fresh Polish acquisitions, which was so strong that he only renounced it when by this sacrifice he was able to hinder the extension of the power of Germany. In this he did at least succeed.

Thanks to Frederick the Great, Germany left the Balkans empty-handed, and even Bismarck shared Frederick's infatuation (or was he wise enough to realise that it was too late ?) and said that the granaries of the Balkans were not worth one bone of a Pomeranian grenadier. One can only cherish the sympathetic hope that Germany may succeed in shipping all the Pomeranians to serve as foreign 'cultural manure' on the wheat-prairies of North and South America, before they are compelled to bleed to no purpose in the Balkans in the cause of that German colonisation, which the 'great' king had frustrated. The great Catherine, who was not, like the German Emperor, thwarted in every great enterprise by a 'great' king and rebel in her own country was able to reap without hindrance enduring successes in the Balkans, but in future she dispensed with Frederick's alliance.

"Frederick's panegyrist, Koser, says: 'Frederick underestimated Catherine's talents and energy; he continued to perceive in her only a vain capricious woman, a second Elizabeth; and the first Elizabeth too he undoubtedly underestimated.' As though a Frederick would ever change his mind! The presumptuous Koser would even have Frederick abandon his childish prejudices regarding England and realise what was actually happening in England, whose 'freedom' he loved to extol. Koser writes (63): 'The wranglings of the parliamentary parties . . . were as despicable as they were incomprehensible to the Prussian autocrat. Cabinets came and went, but in all of them he could perceive only the influence of his bugbear, Lord Bute.' Even 'in Lord North he saw the follower and—quite incorrectly—the tool of the pernicious Bute.' Goethe is disgusted at 'hearing the great Frederick discussed by his own rascallions.' So am I. The cunning Frederick II. only overcame his cherished prejudices when the English in 1784, as in 1756, could once more make use of him. Do not question Frederick's unselfish imperial patriotism in 1784.

"Yes, the great Frederick unselfishly defended the petty ruler of Bavaria—who did not even want to be defended—against the Emperor! He protected the minor princes! He

was in fact the same Frederick who, in his testament of 1752, cudgelled his brains whether he would rather conquer Mecklenburg or Saxony, and who already before the Seven Years' War (February 19, 1756) prepared his eldest brother for 'the pleasure of wiping out Saxony,' a pleasure which the republican King recognised later to be far from exhilarating, though he only renounced it in 1763. Possibly not even then? When the Russian ambassador in 1766 proposed an alliance between Prussia and Saxony, he remarked that the King 'changed colour.'

"None the less, the man who can bluff with sufficient impudence often scores a success. Baron vom Stein, who was twenty-one years of age at the time of the potato war, admitted in his autobiography that it was patriotic enthusiasm inspired by Frederick II.'s championship of Bavaria that had decided him to enter the service of the Prussian state. The critical Lehmann, of Göttingen, to be sure, questions the accuracy of this statement, which was made by vom Stein in his old age, and goes on to say :

" ' When Stein was invited to act as Prussian ambassador in the negotiations concerning the League of Princes, he at first declined. If we recall Stein's words about the Austrian service, we shall deem it not impossible that . . . consideration for Austria was partly responsible for this. The scandal-mongers of Berlin went even further, and maintained that he had declined on account of personal ambition and fear of the Austrian court. This was more than he could stomach, and he immediately declared that he would accept.' This is Lehmann's account.

" But vom Stein was not able to endure for very long this weaving of intrigues against the German Emperor on behalf of Frederick's League of Princes. Already on September 22nd, 1785, he asked for a recall, and got it. When he had a glimpse of Frederick's cards, vom Stein could hardly arrive at any other conclusion than Arndt, who in 1805 penned the following weighty words in regard to the League of Princes :

" ' Nor did the great King ever seriously contemplate uniting the German people in defence of his eagles and holding

before them a common political and cultural aim. There is nothing more absurd than to impute to him patriotic German ideas. With such patriotism did Richelieu and Louvois speak and think of Germany ; with such patriotism do Bonaparte and Talleyrand, his underling, and the German electoral princes, also his underlings, now utter the name of Germany and talk of her freedom. In the same way, I imagine, the wolf occasionally dilates in the parliament of the beasts upon the freedom and the sacred rights of stags. . . . The League of Princes was indeed only a political buffoonery directed against Austria, without patriotic enthusiasm or any genuine bond of loyalty and necessity. Such a bond only holds because it is needed, and hence one which from the outset was cemented by no real harmony was speedily dissolved. Frederick did, it is true, occasionally let fall allusions to German freedom and justice, which were as harmless as many other lying phrases, and served his purpose at the time. The King, in virtue of his belief in an unmitigated despotism, hated everything that savoured of nationalism, because it was antagonistic to despotism, and in relation to the Germans he hated everything that savoured of federation. The readiest weapon seemed to him the best, and therefore the soldier, the most complete puppet, was in his eyes the best and worthiest man in the State.' This was what Arndt wrote in the year 1805."

After reading this quotation from Arndt, Manfred continued as follows : "Hear, on the other hand, how the head of the 'intellectual bodyguard of the Hohenzollerns' gives rein to his fancy in regard to Frederick's political buffoonery. Ranke wrote (64) : 'What King Frederick had striven for from the beginning (!) of his reign, though without (!) success ; namely, to reconcile the great interests of the German Empire with the existence and growth of his own state, now (1784) became possible and urgently desirable for both parties.' One would almost rejoice to be able to reproach Ranke with venality ; but no, this great student of historical archives suffered from the incurable disease of blindness. It was the same guileless Ranke who boldly assumed that : 'Frederick brought upon himself the desperate seven years' struggle by trying in 1756 to keep the

French out of Hanover'; the same Ranke, to whom Max Lehmann (65) gave the cogent answer: 'When the two western powers were squabbling in 1755, Frederick urged the French to carry the war into the German Empire and attack Hanover (66), and when the French tried to saddle him with the execution of this task, Frederick drew their attention to the Austrian Netherlands, which he declared to be so inadequately defended that the whole country could be conquered in a single campaign'."

Then Manfred referred to Frederick's secret Flemish clause in the Treaty of Westminster, which is discussed in detail at the end of the fourth conversation. With an expression almost of exasperation Manfred continued: "Yes, indeed, my friend, the Austrian Netherlands—that is to say, Belgium—there lies the bitter root of the League of Princes, of which your guileless teachers trained in Ranke's school have told you nothing, although from it may yet be concocted a very fearful medicine for Europe.

"Are you aware that Antwerp became, after the discovery of America, the most important trading port of the German Empire? Aye, that Antwerp was the greatest mart in the world? That it became mightier and richer than Venice has ever been? That Antwerp in 1585 was conquered by the Spaniards? That the trade of the world was then diverted to Amsterdam? That soon the Dutch, according to Colbert's estimate, owned sixteen thousand of the twenty thousand trading vessels in the world? That they were so short-sighted as to close the Scheldt, in order to ensure the final ruin of Antwerp? And that, in the Treaty of Westphalia, they defiantly insisted on their independence of the German Empire, only to become instead and very shortly England's outpost on the continent? That they then began to be anxious about their divine rights and once more appealed to the German Emperor for assistance? Thence ensued in 1714 the famous 'Barrier Treaty.' (I recommend you, in connection with this Treaty, to read the memoirs of Saint-Simon, at that time Councillor of the French Regency.) Do you know that in this way the German Emperor succeeded in 1714 in



'recovering complete possession of the Netherlands' ? These are Frederick II.'s own words taken from his *Mémoires de Brandebourg*. Do you know that Prince Eugene himself then became immediately stadtholder of the German Emperor in the reconquered Netherlands ? Do you know that Frederick II. in his *Mémoires* calls Prince Eugene the 'hero of Germany' ; that in his *Histoire de mon Temps* he calls him the 'true Emperor' ? And that this Emperor's commercial enterprises did not—as did invariably those of Frederick II.—become ignominiously bankrupt ? That, on the contrary he successfully established Trieste (1719) as a Free Port, and there, by means of his levantine trading company, secured the trade of Venice for the Empire ? Do you know that, none the less, even the great Eugene was unable to open the Scheldt ? The English in future took great care to ensure this ! Do you know that the Emperor tried to circumvent this measure for obstructing German trade by developing a harbour outside the Scheldt ? Do you know the following passage from Frederick II.'s *Mémoires de Brandebourg* : 'The Emperor gave (1723) to the merchants of Ostend licences to trade with both the Indies. . . . France, England and Holland, alarmed at this project, which was equally injurious to them all, combined to demand the suppression of the new trading company, but the Court of Austria paid no heed, and haughtily proceeded with the execution of its plan.' If you, as a German, admire this haughtiness, you may read further in Frederick's *Mémoires* that Prussia was forthwith drawn by France and England into an alliance against the 'haughty' Emperor and German trade. At school you were probably taught that this Prussian treachery to the Emperor only lasted a year ; but, if you want to know why it continued until 1740, 1756, 1778 and, in particular, until the 'patriotic League of Princes' of 1785, and then again until 1795 and the collapse of Germany, read a little further in Frederick's *Mémoires*. He declares openly that Prussia's alliance of 1725 with the most powerful enemies of the Empire was 'the more enduring, since it was based on the special interests of the parties to the alliance. . . . France and England wanted to injure the House of Austria. To this end they hoped

to make use of the King of Prussia in order to deprive the Emperor of Silesia (!).' These are Frederick's own words.

"No wonder then that fifteen years later he hit upon the idea that Prussia had a 'claim' to Silesia. Frederick's father had been quite unaware of this 'claim,' and had in 1726 promptly and remorsefully turned his back on the alliance with the enemies of the Empire. But Frederick II. remained loyal to these enemies all his life. The mills of the devil grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small. Frederick's civil wars of 1740, 1744, 1756-63 and 1778 Germany will perhaps get over. Perhaps"—Manfred was speaking in 1913—"lasting success will crown the brilliant conjuring trick by which Bismarck juggled back into the hands of Germany the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, which had been secured to the French by Frederick II.'s Silesian wars. But in 1785 Prussia achieved a decisive victory in her struggle on behalf of the French conquest of German Flanders and against the development of German trade.

"The Emperor Joseph II. had seen something of the world ; he had also visited the derelict city of Antwerp on the closed Scheldt.

"After Austria had, as a result of Frederick's intervention, been finally driven out of Alsace in 1744, and had been prevented from reconquering the Emperor's ancient territory of Lorraine, it was hardly possible that Belgium should be retained by Austria, that is to say, by the German Empire. Consequently Joseph II. sought to solve the Belgian problem by the conversion of Austrian Flanders into an autonomous federal state of the Empire and the simultaneous opening of the Scheldt."

Hegemann : "... and simultaneous exchange of Flanders for Bavaria ! Is it not generally accepted that Frederick the Great conferred a benefit on Germany when he prevented the Emperor from conquering Bavaria ? "

Manfred : "The Prussian legend regards any addition to the strength of the German Emperor as an injury—but to whom ? Only to Prussia, to little Germany ! Not Germany, but France would have suffered if Bavaria had passed into the hands of the

Emperor, and if Bavaria had no longer fought 'shoulder to shoulder with France.' The Bavarian electoral princes fought against the German Emperor for centuries as allies of the French. The Prussian scribblers of history will have to scribble a little more industriously before they will convince any one that Bavaria's independence of the Emperor helped the German cause. Goethe wrote to his Duke in 1786 with reference to the Emperor's suggestion of exchanging Bavaria for Flanders: '... the Emperor will certainly not be allowed to have his way. Any one who tries to persuade France that she will suffer no loss by agreeing to the exchange of Bavaria, does not believe this himself, and no reasonable man will believe his assurance.' Yes! If Frederick II. had but opposed the exchange, so that a territory as important to the German power as Flanders should not be lost for ever to the Emperor and the Empire! Instead of this, he did everything in his power to procure it for the French! And any one who looked to Frederick II. for great German national ideas would be a fool. Frederick II., in his testament of 1752, explained the nature of the Prussian policy: 'To fight shoulder to shoulder with France and so form a counterweight to the imperial power.' And this policy continued to seem to him the most suitable for Prussia. Had the German Emperor conquered Bavaria, France and Prussia would no longer have been able to offer any resistance to the hereditary enemy, Germany. This misfortune was averted by Frederick II., and later—as Ferdinand of Brunswick relates—by Frederick's disciple, Lucchesini.

"If, on the other hand, a peaceful and prosperous Germany had been able to convey her merchandise through the wide-flung gate of a friendly Belgium, there would perhaps still have been some hope for Germany in the great contest against the sea-powers, that is to say, against England, who had made Holland her continental bridgehead, and had the mainland at Flanders, that is to say, at the Scheldt, firmly by the throat.

"Goethe was right: it was a triumph of imperial policy to succeed in winning over the French. Yes, it was a triumph of German and of continental policy, when the Emperor succeeded in enlisting the support of the French for the libera-

tion of the Scheldt. Even Ranke concedes: 'These two events, the opening of the Scheldt with the initial cooperation of France, and the encouragement of the exchange of the Netherlands for Bavaria by Russia, constitute a triumph for the policy of Prince Kaunitz.' Even Ranke cannot maintain that the Emperor, in opening the Scheldt, was merely pursuing Austria's eastern ambitions. On the contrary, the German Emperor, to quote Ranke, 'recovered his predominant position in Europe, which had been undermined by Prussia.' But nothing was more calculated to strike terror in Berlin than the thought of the restoration of the German imperial power! Ranke therefore continues: 'Frederick saw himself outflanked on all sides by the activity of the Emperor. . . . The moment had now come to enter into an alliance with the Princes of the Empire.' Why? ' . . . in order to oppose a resolute resistance to the encroachments of Austria.' Woe to the German Emperor, who ventured to pursue an intelligent pan-German policy, so long as there was a King of Prussia, whom the English dubbed 'great,' because he held the German Emperor in check, and obstructed a pan-German policy, or because he could also, when necessary—as in 1756 to 1763—be played off against France.

"Frederick was, as he himself said, 'beside himself.' The German Emperor had succeeded in blinding the French to the huge import of his plans. Frederick, who was gratefully convinced of France's divine mission in the eternal struggle against the German imperial crown, declared the French to be devoid of all honour if they contemplated for one moment betraying the very purpose of their existence. In his letters to Finck (1785) he referred to the Emperor as that 'deuced Joseph' or the 'accursed tyrant of Vienna,' and he feared 'that France, at this moment which was decisive for her honour, may be betrayed into weakness and have her nose bled in consequence. What cowards the French are, and how can I alone (that is to say, without the French) defend the Germanic constitution?' (10, ii. 1785). Already in 1778 (10, viii.), when Frederick II. was striving so zealously to induce the French to invade the German Empire, he wrote to his confidants, Finck and Herzberg: 'Now is the moment when all who call themselves

German must stand together to defend the freedom and the constitution won by our forefathers through the Treaty of Westphalia'—that is to say, by the great Cardinal Mazarin, to the enduring detriment of the German power.

"These were the same lying asseverations, which ever since 1740 Frederick II. always kept handy in case of need. In 1740, in order to mislead the unsuspecting Maria Theresa with regard to his treacherous intentions, he had instructed Podewils (67): 'In Hanover, in Mainz, they must speak of the patriotic heart that we need and that we lack! I will sustain the Empire; I will be on guard against the first sign of weakness in the imperial house. . . . In London they must say that I intend to force the Austrians to place themselves "on the side of the seafaring people and of religion".' Droysen, with truly Prussian enthusiasm, called this 'magnificent political calculation,' and in this world of his youthful phantasy the adult Frederick was still living in 1785. He was too busy compiling his numerous historical works to observe that the French, thanks to the glorious Seven Years' War, had abandoned their claims to India, America and world-power to an England whose diplomacy was in the hands of people who were neither misled by Frederick's childish intrigues nor filled with admiration for his sovereign philosophic virtues. Ranke writes: 'In December, 1784, a new English ambassador, Sir James Harris—later Lord Malmesbury—made his appearance. . . . While by no means on friendly terms with Frederick, rather at loggerheads with him—he is one of the small number of Frederick's contemporaries who did not admire him—he none the less conceived the King's relationship to the Dutch hereditary stadtholder to be a motive for securing his cooperation.' Thus England secured Frederick's cooperation, and Frederick played to perfection the rôle assigned to him.

"If the next great war, as my Boston cousin, Brooks Adams, prophesies in his book, hangs upon Belgium, and if England above all defends the inviolability of her continental bridgehead, one can wish her no better fortune than that she may find in Prussia a powerful ally, who will be as resolute in defending the Belgian neutrality clauses of 1839, as was Ferderick II. in de-

fending the ‘solemn treaties,’ which secured to the Dutch Republic her property and her rights. Thus did Frederick II. speak (8, xi. 1784) of the barricading, that is to say, the violation of the then German Belgium, which was secured to the jealous Dutch by the ‘solemn treaties’ of 1648 and 1714 and was still more jealously defended by the English. Frederick II. was not at all disturbed by the fact that he himself had long since treated these treaties as a scrap of paper. When, after 1744, he took possession (in exchange for the thereby extinguished Silisian claims!) of the territory he had inherited in East Frisia, he summarily drove out the Dutch garrison from Emden, although their right of occupation was based on the same ‘solemn treaty’ as obstructed the Scheldt and the trade of German Belgium. When the Dutch ambassador at Vienna insisted on the sacredness of this treaty, Prince Kaunitz answered him quite frankly: ‘We no longer want this treaty’; but this remark was violently denounced by the Prussian Press of 1785!

“The German Emperor declared in July, 1784: ‘Any obstacle placed by Holland in the way of free navigation I shall henceforth regard as an act of hostility, as a declaration of war. To discuss this matter any further is unworthy of a great power.’ And Ranke, who dare not rejoice that a German Emperor should show some dignity in his attitude towards a foreign country, makes the grudging admission: ‘With the proud spirit born of a sense of power, Joseph combined the faculty of estimating coolly and craftily the weakness of his opponent, with a view to his own advantage. Sure of the approval of Russia, and—as he thought—of France, he decided that Holland would not venture to resist his superior force.’

“But Holland did venture! For England, though too exhausted to offer armed assistance, found once more in Prussia the lifelong betrayer of the German cause, Frederick ‘the Great,’ ready—as always—to fight against the honour and the power of the German Empire. On October 4th, 1784, the Emperor wrote: ‘If a shot is fired at me, I shall reply.’

“On October 6th Holland fired a shot, trusting to Frederick II. and the English, on the first German ship to pass down the Scheldt flying the imperial flag. ‘And this ship fell into the

hands of the Dutch,' writes Ranke, with the complacency of the fossilised Prussian Privy Councillor.

"When the Emperor prepared to send troops into German Flanders for the defence of the German cause against Holland, Prussia refused them passage. On the other hand, the recruiting of troops by the Dutch in the German Empire (that is, against the Emperor!), which the Emperor forbade, was allowed by the German hero, Frederick, in the Prussian domain. The Emperor was therefore compelled to choose between a fresh civil war and an ignominious climbing-down before Holland, who had shot at the German flag.

"You will say that, under these circumstances, it was the duty of the Emperor to fight against Frederick II. and the other enemies of the Empire. But Frederick had in the meantime succeeded in stirring up the French against the Empire. The French Minister, Vergennes, who had until then tried to persuade the Dutch to submit, suddenly declared: 'that France cannot abandon the Dutch, now her allies, to the superior forces of the Emperor.' An attempt on the part of the Emperor to punish the Dutch insult and the Prussian revolt might have been the beginning of another wearisome European conflict like the Seven Years' War."

Hegemann: "I am still unable to believe that you are not exaggerating the importance of the Scheldt question, and that you are not perhaps far too arbitrary in implicating foreign countries, and above all England, in what was in fact a purely German question: whether in 1785 Austrian supremacy in Germany was to be enhanced by the acquisition of Bavaria or no?" To this objection Manfred answered:

"When Frederick II. drove the Dutch garrison out of Emden, this would not perhaps have induced the English to move so much as a finger, because nothing could better safeguard them against the competition of the port of Emden than its transference into the possession of Prussia. Prussia traded only in recruits and in nothing else. Possibly for this reason they deemed it superfluous to purchase this promising port, when Frederick tried to barter it to England in 1745. (In 1744 Frederick offered Emden to the Dutch.) (68) The

English had judged aright. 'Every commercial enterprise (of Frederick II.) has universally failed,' reported Lord Malmesbury to his Government in 1773, and this was true also of Frederick's clumsy attempts at Emden, no matter whether the name of the enterprise were 'East Asiatic Company' or 'Bengal Company' or 'Levantine Company.' The English were not even affrighted when Frederick II. trustfully employed the merchant, Dahrl, of whom his Minister, Fredersdorf, wrote to him on July 8th, 1754: 'He undertakes in two years to get the Spanish trade transferred from Hamburg, Altona and almost all Holland to Stettin. He asks, however, that his proposal may be kept as secret as possible. . . . My fever has left me, but I am worried about my chest and my bad cough and the pains that I suffer. I am a miserable creature . . .' and so on. But whether the Prussian King gossiped with his trusty Fredersdorf 'in strict confidence' about his hæmorrhoids or about trade proposals was a matter of supreme indifference to the English. With the perspicacity of the gambler for great stakes, they had even played low at the beginning of the fifties, when Frederick the Great took it into his head to demand the freedom of the seas for his 'baby fleet,' as the English called it in derision. They allowed him to have his way, and then allowed him to conquer America and India 'in Germany'—for England. In the same way the English have now (1913) allowed us Americans to fortify the Panama Canal, in violation of our undertaking. The English will know in good time how to make use of us.

"But the English took quite a different view in 1784, when the German Emperor set to work to liberate his Flemish provinces, and championed the 'doctrine of the unrestricted freedom of the seas.' 'Never did the projects of the Emperor aim higher,' writes Ranke, and explains how the Emperor won the help of Russia and France, and how the English were exhausted by their American wars (69): 'The conflicts of Europe grouped themselves round the little incident on the Scheldt.' At this decisive moment the English decided that a 'great and significant' measure was required. And with guileless enthusiasm Ranke writes of the League of Princes: 'Yet another great and important work was accomplished under the auspices



of Frederick, the outstanding feature of which was an agreement between Brandenburg and Hanover. George III., both in his general capacity of King of England and—as regards relations with Germany—in his capacity of Elector of Hanover, felt the necessity of an understanding with Frederick the Great.’ And Frederick the Great, to whom the freedom of the seas had suddenly become a matter of complete indifference, pledged himself to the German princes ‘upon his old-German, princely word of honour,’ (70) to defend the ‘freedom of Germany.’

“The English ambassador in Berlin declared that the ‘new Germanic League’ represented a ‘principle of reunion between England and Prussia.’ (71) And Treitschke, of Berlin, writes rejoicingly: ‘Never did Frederick the Great promise to foreign powers one clod of German soil; never did he allow his State to be misused for their purposes.’ (72)

“The Scheldt remained closed! Holland (and France!) paid the Emperor a fine of 10,000,000 gulden. And Bavaria remained French, and fired off her cannon to celebrate 1806! And Frederick is a great German king! And Treitschke and Ranke are great ‘historians’!

“There is a much-read German novel by Brachvogel entitled *Friedemann Bach*. In it the King has Lessing’s *Nathan* read to him, until ‘a glowing fire of deep emotion is kindled in his veins.’ Then the great King exclaims: ‘Lessing is a German genius; he has my homage! The French should beg at his feet for a spark of his sublime intelligence! Where does the man live? Let him come to Berlin at once; I must have him near me!’ Then come the ministers of the great King. ‘The conference related to the last great inspiration of Frederick’s life, the League of Princes, in which he tried to safeguard the European continent against future wars by the equilibrium and solidarity of the dynastic interests, and to guide the nations in the development of their material prosperity.’ The King postpones the foundation of this important League of Princes, in order to command that the great composer, Friedemann Bach, shall be brought to him immediately. Then the great King goes ‘slowly, without speaking a word, to the cedar room and shuts himself in. . . . He takes up a volume of sermons

and sinks down on a chair. He can hardly read the print for tears.’ This and much else of the sort is to be found in the popular German story, *Friedemann Bach*. In reality, Frederick hardly gave a thought to this composer. But in regard to F. Bach’s at that time more famous brother, who complained of having been ill-treated by Frederick, the great King wrote to Fredersdorf in May, 1755: ‘Bac lies! He once played at a concert here; now he takes spirit.’ Cannot the Prussian historians lie much better than ‘Bac,’ and has not the ‘spirit’ fuddled them much more seriously? The truth proclaimed outright by Arndt in 1805, that Frederick’s League of Princes was not ‘great,’ but ‘only a political buffoonery directed against Austria,’ has been suppressed by Prussian historians for more than a century. At the present day these gentlemen can, in their ‘learned’ works, which they know that no one reads, safely admit the truth, for they are quite sure that public opinion has been thoroughly and irreparably misled, and is it not for the purpose of misleading public opinion that ‘learning’ exists in Prussia?

“After Frederick’s feverish attempts to enrich himself by dint of ill-judged commercial enterprises had all ‘universally failed,’ and after he had by base intrigues hampered the development of German trade, in his old age the notion occurred to him that poverty was a virtue. He was indeed a philosopher, and loved April fooleries! Ranke writes admiringly:

“‘With a kind of moral rapture (!), such as characterised his youth, Frederick the Great, in a letter (1, iv. 1782) to his confidant, the Duke of Brunswick, once referred to the increasing wealth of England since the conquest of the East Indies. He considers this to be prejudicial to the nation and to the government, for thereby luxury and venality are encouraged, and the former high standards of political honour are likely to be forfeited. “I prefer,” he writes, “our simplicity and our poverty to riches. Let our adornments be honour, courage and unselfishness. One must look for the man in the man, not in those externals which are no part of himself.” He is happy in the consciousness that he has dedicated his powers to the society to which he belongs, administered justice,

maintained order, and preserved the army on its superior level.' This is Ranke's account. (73)

"If, in spite of this mood of philosophic renunciation, the King none the less took important measures for the development of Prussian trade, these were to serve above all for the propagation of religion and for popular enlightenment. Thus on July 10th, 1779, he commanded that the small images of saints should be sold more cheaply, and that their manufacturers should find out: 'What saints the people have a preference for, and make the largest number of these.' (74) His royal Academy was an opportunity for the royal pioneer of enlightenment to develop a brisk trade in the cause of popular education. He had in 1744 conferred on his Academy the exclusive privilege of supplying his people with calendars, which became the principal reading matter of the common man, and were, if one may accept the evidence of the royal historiographer, Preuss, even more stupid than those of other countries.

"Preuss (75) relates that not until 1779 was an attempt made to eliminate superstition from the popular calendars of the Academy. 'The Royal Academy of the Sciences,' thus did it describe itself, 'could no longer suffer the common, ignorant man to be bamboozled by unfounded prophecies of the weather, useless enumeration of the dates which, for no reason whatever, were declared to be most favourable for bleeding, cupping, child-weaning, etc., and other foolish nonsense.' Thus wrote the Academy. But Preuss declares further: 'Unfortunately it so happened that the new, reasonable calendars found no purchasers (76), and that in the following year it was found necessary to produce once more the old rubbish, namely, the so-called "Selections," or recommendations, when it was best to cut trees, to have the hair trimmed, to wean children, to bleed, to bleed with special advantage, to cup, to sow and plant, when it was a bad time to take medicine, a good time to vomit or to sweat, etc. By its well-intentioned experiment the Academy sacrificed half its revenues.'

"The great Frederick had not given his Academy other revenues; so it continued, to use its own expression, to 'bamboozle the common, ignorant man with foolish nonsense' for

the sake of money. This was continued until after the death of Frederick, as the result of his forty-six years of activity on behalf of the intellectual and economic impoverishment of his people, and, as I have just explained to you, the Prussian professors of history have been faithfully continuing the bamboozling efforts of the Frederician academy down to the present day."

This conversation had a sequel which rather upset me. I had experienced a certain distress and disappointment at hearing all this unexpected information about the King whom I admired. That his trading enterprises were unsuccessful I could believe. I was no longer a child, and had long felt considerable doubts regarding the Prussian bureaucratic achievements in the domain of practical life. But I hoped at least to find that Manfred had exaggerated the significance of the imperial trading enterprises in Flanders. I was anxious to know whether the whole Belgian affair, which Manfred had described to me as an English stroke of genius directed against the German Empire, did not wear quite a different appearance to English eyes. I therefore consulted the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, beside whose thirty-five stout leather-bound volumes the German encyclopaedias in Manfred's library cut quite a sorry figure. This English encyclopaedia, for the sale of which in America an immense publicity campaign was organised, was criticised there during the War—and not only by pro-Germans—as giving a too biassed and anglophile version of events. I could therefore hope to find in regard to the Belgian affair an account which would not be flattering to Austrian self-esteem but would fit the incidents into the frame of English world policy. Unfortunately, however, all that I found only confirmed what Manfred had told me. The following are some of the passages which I collected from the articles on: Scheldt, Antwerp, Ostend, Ostend Company, French Revolution, India, Spain, etc., all in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*:

"The Scheldt (on which Antwerp is situated) has a length of 250 m., of which 207 m. are navigable. . . . Below Antwerp . . . both banks belong to Holland. Ghent too, from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century the focus of Germany's trade

with the Netherlands, was, like Brussels, dependent on the Scheldt for access to the sea. . . .

"It was not . . . till after the closing of the Zwyn and the decay of Bruges that Antwerp became of importance. At the end of the fifteenth century, the foreign trading gilds or houses were transferred from Bruges to Antwerp. In 1560, a year which marked the highest point of its prosperity . . . over 1000 foreign merchants were resident in the city. Guicciardini, the Venetian envoy, describes the activity of the port, into which 500 ships sometimes passed in a day and . . . 2000 carts entered the city each week . . . there was as much business there in a fortnight as in Venice throughout the year. . . . In 1576 the Spanish soldiery plundered the town during what was called 'The Spanish Fury,' and 6000 citizens were massacred. . . . In 1585 . . . Parma captured it . . . and sent all its Protestant citizens into exile. . . . The Treaty of Münster in 1648 carried with it the deathblow to Antwerp's prosperity . . . for one of its clauses stipulated that the Scheldt should be closed to navigation." Ostend was conquered in 1604 after three years' siege by the Spaniards, and was almost entirely laid waste, but was speedily rebuilt. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Ostend seemed to be on the road to economic prosperity, when the Emperor Charles VI. made it the seat of his East-Indian Company. But the intervention of powerful neighbours, above all of England and Holland, saw to it—by the Vienna Treaty of 1732—that this revival was put an end to. "But the jealousy of the neighbouring nations was shown by the seizure of an Ostend merchantman with its rich cargo by the Dutch in 1719 off the coast of Africa, and of another by the English near Madagascar. The Ostenders, however . . . persevered in their project. The opposition of the Dutch made Charles VI. hesitate for some time to grant their requests, but on the 19th of December, 1722, letters patent were granted . . . and subscriptions to the company flowed in so rapidly that the shares were at the end of August, 1723, at 12 to 15 per cent premium. Two factories were established, one . . . near Madras, the other . . . on the Ganges. . . . The prospects of the Company appeared to be most encouraging, but its promoters had not

reckoned with the jealousy and hostility of the Dutch and the English. The Dutch appealed to the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), by which the King of Spain had prohibited the inhabitants of the Southern Netherlands from trading with the Spanish colonies. The transference of the Southern Netherlands to Austria by the peace of Utrecht (1713) did not, said the Dutch, remove the disability. The Spanish Government, however, after some hesitation, concluded a treaty of commerce with Austria and recognised the company of Ostend. The reply to this was a defensive league concluded in Herrenhausen in 1725 by England, the United Provinces and Prussia. Confronted with such formidable opposition, the court of Vienna judged it best to yield (in the treaties of Paris, 1727, and Vienna, 1732). . . . The Austrian Netherlands were condemned to remain excluded from maritime commerce with the Indies until 1815.

"When in 1727 the Ostend Company—at first for only seven years—was doomed to inactivity, a number of its officials lost their means of livelihood. Henry Koning, of Stockholm, succeeded in turning their intimate knowledge of the East to good account, when in 1731 he succeeded in obtaining a charter there for the 'Swedish Company.' After the Ostend Company had had to fight against a series of grave obstacles, and had only been kept alive by the wish of the Austrian Government to share in the East Indian trade, it finally went bankrupt in 1784 (!). . . . This impediment (the closing of the Scheldt) remained in force until 1863, although its provisions were relaxed during French rule from 1795 to 1814, and also during the time Belgium formed part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (1815 to 1830). Antwerp had reached the lowest point of its fortunes in 1800, and its population had sunk under 40,000, when Napoleon, realising its strategical importance, assigned two millions for the construction of two docks and a mole. . . ." "Intoxicated with these victories (Valmy, etc.), the Convention (French National Convention, 1792-1795) abandoned itself to the fervour of propaganda and conquest. The River Scheldt had been closed to commerce by various treaties, to which England and Holland, neutral powers, were

parties. Without a pretence of negotiation the French Government declared on the 16th of November that the Scheldt was thenceforward open. On the 19th a decree of the Convention offered the aid of France to all nations which were striving after freedom—in other words, to the malcontents in every neighbouring state. Towards Great Britain . . . the Convention behaved with singular folly. There, in spite of a growing antipathy to the Revolution, Pitt earnestly desired to maintain peace. The (French) conquest of the Netherlands and the symptoms of a wish to annex that country made his task more difficult. But the French Government underrated the strength of Great Britain. . . .” After 1815 the Dutch maintained their right to levy tolls. “The Dutch had the right to make this levy under treaties going back to the Treaty of Münster in 1648, and they clung to it still more tenaciously after Belgium separated herself in 1830-31 from the United Kingdom of the Netherlands—the London Conference in 1839 fixing the toll payable to Holland at 1.50 florins (3s.) per ton.”

I had progressed so far with my extracts from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, when Manfred surprised me at the work, and burst out laughing.

Manfred: “If you want to study the Scheldt question, you should not neglect the most important article, that on my father’s friend, Baron Lambermont. Lambermont is the liberator of Belgium and of the North-West European continent. Lambermont did what the Emperor Charles VI. and the Emperor Joseph II., in consequence of the short-sighted infamy of Prussia, were unable to do, and what the French National Convention and the Emperor Napoleon only temporarily succeeded in achieving.”

Manfred opened the sixteenth volume of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and read out:

“Auguste Lambermont (1819-1905) was one of the very first Belgians to see the importance of developing the trade of their country. . . . The tolls imposed by the Dutch on navigation of the Scheldt strangled Belgian trade. . . . From 1856 to 1863 Lambermont devoted most of his energies to the

removal of this impediment. In 1856 he drew up a plan of action, and he prosecuted it with untiring perseverance until he saw it embodied in an international convention seven years later. Twenty-one powers and states attended a conference held on the question at Brussels in 1863, and on the 15th of July the treaty freeing the Scheldt was signed. For this achievement Lambermont was made a baron. . . . Belgium bought the Dutch toll-right, and each of the powers that derived advantage from her trade made a contribution to the purchase-price. Navigation on the Scheldt was thereby declared free. . . . Since the year 1863 the position of Antwerp has completely altered, and no port in Europe has since then made greater progress than the old city on the Scheldt'."

After reading this from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Manfred said: "A great man, Baron Lambermont! But when one has duly admired him, one should not forget that he only succeeded in frustrating Frederick the Great's anti-continental policy, because the English no longer needed it. They no longer need to fear Belgian competition, and they secured their continental bridgehead through the 'Declaration of Neutrality' of Belgium and Holland in 1839. England is in world politics at once noble and base, like a great lover, who is loved because he is strong, no matter how base he may be. England may do violence to Ireland, India or the Transvaal or may poison China, but she is loved for it in the end. Thus the English ill-treated Belgium for two hundred years, but when the prophesied European War comes about and centres round Belgium, I dare wager that Belgium will be found on the side of England. For the strong deserve to be loved. The weakling who tries to engage in world politics is contemptible. And the plans of the 'pan-Germans' who are at the present time venturing to assert claims to Belgium sound to me like the rascally designs of a degenerate weakling. After Germany had for a hundred years failed to perceive that Belgium must be made free; after Germany had for a hundred and fifty years approved Frederick II.'s policy of hostility to the continent; after Belgium had been compelled finally to achieve her own liberation, German claims to Belgium sound at the present day much like



the claims of an unworthy man, whom a noble woman has abandoned and justly despises."

Hegemann: "You made some unexpected disclosures to me regarding Goethe's literary and diplomatic campaigns against Frederick II., and in the *Encyclopaedia* I read about the struggle of the French National Convention for the emancipation of Belgium. Is it not a remarkable irony of world-history that Goethe afterwards at Valmy fought against the liberators of that Belgium, for whom in *Egmont* he composed a Hymn of Freedom?"

Manfred: "At Valmy Goethe was a cautious observer. After Duke Ferdinand's shameful retreat before the enemy's guns, he declared by the camp-fire: 'From this spot and this day there begins a new epoch in the world's history.'

"What makes me certain that Goethe was moved to publish his essay, *Literary Sansculottism*, from which I read you some extracts, by the shameful events of 1792 and 1795 is the development of his relations to Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick, as described in the *Campaign in France*.

"Goethe had been prepared to overlook the crotchets and insolences of the autocrat of Sanssouci, but the events of 1792 and 1795 had proved that even the death of that self-willed old gentleman had not put an end to Prussia's fatal hostility to the Empire. The conduct of Prussia after the death of Frederick II. was such that even Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick, who had till then steadfastly supported Prussia, turned his back on it in disgust. This disgust with Prussia brought together Goethe and Ferdinand of Brunswick, and explains Goethe's words: 'He had never really liked me; that I had to make the best of. He did not disguise his feelings; that I could forgive him. Now, however, misfortune acted as a mediator, and united us with a bond of sympathy.'

"This transformation of the political views of the Duke of Brunswick filled Goethe, the politician, with a painful but by no means inconsiderable satisfaction; but, since his petty sovereign, the Duke of Weimar, believed himself, in virtue of the geographical position of his province, as well as of his own inclination and ties of kinship, to be bound irrevocably to

Prussia, Goethe had to keep silence. 'What he ought to write, he may not write,' Goethe makes a shrewd man say of the author of the *Campaign in France*. The interpretation put upon Goethe's words concerning the Duke of Brunswick by Ottokar Lorenz becomes still more convincing if one reads the reports given by Mirabeau and Lord Malmesbury of conversations with the Duke of Brunswick, one of which exhibits the Duke before and the other after his return from Prussia, that is to say, before and after the misfortune which 'brought together' Duke Ferdinand and Goethe. Let me read to you first what Professor Lorenz, of Jena, says very shrewdly in explanation of this coming together: 'The Duke of Brunswick, at the time when the first attempt was made to found the League of Princes (Goethe's), was one of its frank opponents. As against the original Weimar and Dessau-Baden plans, he was in favour of supporting Prussia, and he it was, in fact, who supported the King in his design of making the League serve the interests of Prussia. When the Duke was first initiated by the Prince of Dessau into the secret of the minor princes, he declared this kind of alliance to be nothing but political day-dreaming. It seems almost as though he were thereby criticising the influence of men, whom he considered lacking in practical knowledge and experience.' This would appear to be aimed at Goethe.

"The position adopted by Ferdinand of Brunswick, as a Prussian general and as a 'practical and experienced' politician, towards the League-of-Princes day-dreaming of Goethe, Dalberg and Edelsheim, is very admirably expressed in the following words, which Mirabeau heard from the mouth of the Duke immediately after the death of Frederick II.—noble words which will perhaps some day find a response: 'Believe me,' (the Duke was speaking of the doubtful prospects of the new King of Prussia) 'I can in some degree serve you as a thermometer; for when I perceive that there is no prospect of a firm and honourable government, and that therefore the days of the House of Brandenburg are numbered, I shall not be the last to withdraw. I have never received a penny from the King of Prussia . . . his service imposes great sacrifices on me . . .

I am independent. I should be very glad to prove my respect for the memory of Frederick the Great; I am quite prepared to shed my blood for the consummation of his work, but I will never be an accessory to the destruction of this work, not even by my presence. I shall therefore only follow the fortunes of the Prussian monarchy, so long as it governs with wisdom and dignity. . . .’

“Thus spoke Ferdinand of Brunswick. Bismarck expressed himself to much the same effect.”

Hegemann: “Why should you try to interpret these words of Ferdinand as anything more than his assurance that he considered Frederick the Great to be a better king than his successor?”

Manfred: “Ferdinand’s words were directed less against the new Prussian King, who had definitely broken with the Frederician policy of hostility to the German Emperor, than against Lucchesini, who loyally continued the policy of Frederick II., and was powerful enough to be able to force back Prussia into the fatal Frederician path.

“Moreover the events of 1792 finally convinced Ferdinand of Brunswick also that neither wisdom nor dignity were to be found in the Prussian Government. Certainly in 1794 Malmesbury heard from the mouth of the Duke bitter complaints against the King of Prussia, who left the Duke ‘*dans une situation incroyable*.’ But: ‘(the Duke) added that during the siege of Mainz Lucchesini said to him: “When this is over, we must do as little as possible and leave the rest to the Austrians”; that, however, then would have been the moment for acting; that the German armies were of 60,000 men each, and the French . . . not more than 70,000 altogether; that if the Prussians and Austrians had then advanced, the campaign would have been a glorious one, but Lucchesini’s cunning or corruption, and Lord Beauchamp’s inability prevented it.’ The Duchess, before whom all this was said, observed: ‘You seem to be disgusted with Prussia?’ ‘To be sure,’ said he. ‘Never was a man so ill-used as I have been, they treat me with civility in public in order to *m’écraiser* in private.’ ‘Politeness and amiability . . . without raising a finger to help me,’ was the

reproach made by Goethe against Lucchesini. In Lord Malmesbury's account, the Duke of Brunswick concluded with these words: 'Bischoffswerder had certainly consented to the House of Austria having Bavaria, but that Lucchesini had declared to him that this never should be as long as he had any influence.'

"Yes, Lucchesini was worthy of his master, Frederick!"

Hegemann: "You mentioned Goethe's remark: 'Any one who tries to persuade France that she can without loss agree to the exchange of Bavaria does not believe it himself, and no reasonable man will believe his assurance.' But was not Goethe, after the failure of his League-of-Princes plans in the interests of the Emperor, so much of a partisan that one should not trust his judgment? What, for instance, do the leading German historians say? Do they not consider that the saving of Bavaria by Frederick was a blessing?"

Manfred could not restrain a laugh as he answered me: "Goethe said very prudently: 'No reasonable man will believe it!' Hence that the leading Prussian 'historians' believe it, you may be sure. And the 'saving' of Bavaria is exactly the word used, for example, by Frederick's unblushing flatterer, Koser, when he rejoices at the 'great political defeat of the Emperor.'

"But of the fact that Goethe's judgment is much more accurate than that of the Prussian history-mongers, you may also find evidence in Koser. He writes: 'After the ascent to the throne of Louis XVI., Broglie, the director of the secret diplomacy of Louis XV., declared that France had sunk, in the alliance with Austria, to the position of a third or fourth-rate power, that the ardent military aspirations of the Emperor Joseph must be checked, and the old relations with Prussia resumed.' Those loyal ministers, Finckenstein and Herzberg, proceeded to warn their great King of Prussia in moving terms of the fate which awaited France at the hands of the young German Emperor. Koser continues unblushingly: 'They declared to the King that, by exchanging Bavaria for Belgium, the Emperor would place himself in a position to reconquer Alsace and his original territory in Lorraine!' Terrible!

That was in January 1785. When in the following February the newspapers announced this exchange to be an accomplished fact, Frederick II. gave vent to outbursts of wrath against the 'accursed Joseph' and those dishonourable and cowardly rascals, the French, who had been so feeble in their resistance to the German Emperor. Hence 'I must redouble my prudence and energy, and be ever on my guard against the abominable plans which this accursed Joseph hatches daily,' the great King then wrote, and in fact, only by 'redoubled energy' was he able to save Alsace-Lorraine for the French. When he had then 'saved Bavaria,' he wrote gratefully (21, ii. 85), 'I praise God from the bottom of my soul.' France's necessity taught him to pray. And truly, he had reason to thank God. Only a year before he had complained: 'We shall not find a single power to vouchsafe us so much as the shadow of an alliance,' and now the two great western kingdoms stood suddenly at the side of 'the League of Princes'. So Koser declares, still without a blush, and he goes on: 'Just as England supported the League of Princes in view of the dynastic interests of her allied province, Hanover, so did France support it in accordance with her traditional policy of upholding the liberty of the princes of the Empire'."

I stared in utter bewilderment at Koser's standard work, in whose 1400 large octavo pages all these shameful things are to be found. Then suddenly my eye chanced upon the sentence with which Koser concludes the passage on the League of Princes, and with a fresh flicker of hope I read out the following to my host: "'Prussia's unquestionable diplomatic victory had the glamour of a national victory, and was greeted with the utmost enthusiasm. His 'superiority in everything,' to repeat Goethe's expression, was again corroborated. 'Secure in his power,' Frederick appeared to the rising generation, to quote Goethe's metaphor, 'the polar star, around which Germany, Europe, indeed the world, seemed to revolve'."

Manfred repeated the word 'seemed': "Behind this seeming was that 'buffoonery' censured by Ernst Moritz Arndt and concerning which the Emperor Joseph remarked very truly: 'By means of an absurd fabrication, it has been possible to get

together a sufficient number of blockheads to form a so-called League of German Liberty'."

Hegemann: "But Goethe was not a blockhead! His comparison of Frederick with the polar star is surely not without significance!"

Manfred: "Oh, certainly! And Goethe was the last person to have been taken in by Frederick's 'absurd League of German Liberty.' The greatest political effort that Goethe ever made was in fact frustrated by Frederick's absurd League. For that reason, when Koser tries to convey the impression that this League against the Empire had Goethe's blessing, he really does exceed even that degree of misrepresentation to be expected from a historian loyal to the traditions of the Frederician Academy. In the two sentences of the eleventh and seventeenth book of *Poetry and Truth*, which Koser combines for the purpose of his historical fabrication, one of them speaks of 'Frederick the Second,' the appellation of 'great' being reserved for Catherine of Russia. Very rightly, for Goethe is in fact speaking of the seventies, when Frederick 'the second' had become hopelessly dependent on 'the great' Catherine. As regards Goethe's second remark, with which Koser threw dust in the eyes of his readers, one has only to read this in its context to perceive that it was a mocking allusion to Frederick and his flatterer. For Goethe is talking of his Strassburg student days (1770, and therefore sixteen years before the League of Princes), of his 'decision, to give up the French language, and to devote ourselves to our mother-tongue with more energy and earnestness than hitherto,' and Goethe adds a good many other vigorous German words. After these avowals Goethe's good-natured ridicule of the incorrigibly francophile Frederick begins with the following words: 'On the other hand, if we looked towards the north, there shone Frederick, the polar star, round which Germany, Europe, aye the world seemed to revolve. His supremacy in everything was most conspicuously revealed, when not only Prussian drill but even the Prussian stick was introduced into the French army. We could forgive him, moreover, his preference for a foreign tongue, as we had the satisfaction of knowing that his French

poets, philosophers and literary men were a constant source of irritation to him and repeatedly declared that he was only to be regarded and treated as an interloper,' and that 'the King who emulated French culture lacked taste.' Please bear in mind that these allusions to Frederick's defeat in the intellectual domain and to the 'superiority of Prussian drill and even of the Prussian stick' were written immediately after 1806, thus after it had long been made clear to the whole world that it was impossible, even under the old French régime, to ill-treat French soldiers as Frederick ill-treated his soldiers, and also after 'Prussian drill' had given place to Napoleon's new tactics, and the 'Prussian stick' had long since been discarded by Gneisenau, with other Frederician practices, as an insult to humanity.

"But Goethe's ridicule of the fixed ideas of Frederick, the 'polar star,' does not only refer to Frederick's francomania and love of thrashing. Frederick's 'self-willed, prejudiced, incorrigible mode of thought' had become increasingly evident to Goethe. That these words of Goethe (whose blessing Koser fraudulently invokes on the League against the Emperor), though provoked by Frederick's literary atrocities, were equally applicable to him as a politician, was even more bitterly apparent to Prince Kaunitz, whose lifelong struggle on behalf of Germany's claims to Alsace-Lorraine, Belgium and the colonial territory in the East would never have ended in failure but for Frederick's constant readiness to support any enemy of the Empire.

"Kaunitz, of whose Franco-German alliance a famous Frenchman said that it had pushed back France, Germany's most dangerous neighbour, 'into the rank of a third-rate power,' said of Frederick II.: 'The motives of the King of Prussia are not to be sought in prudent foresight or sound statesmanship, but in his personal whims and idiosyncrasies, his gloomy solitude, his hatred of his fellow-men, his inveterate contempt for moral obligations, his failing health and his ineradicable private antagonisms'."

"Any one who compared Frederick II. with a fixed star would do well to bear in mind his fixed idea of implacable hostility towards any extension of the power of Germany, and also the

fact that Frederick appeared to the many German patriots inside and outside Prussia who were eagerly awaiting his death in the light of a fatal star that lingered all too long.

"Let us be clear on this point; he is still lingering at the present day. Thanks to Frederick the Great, Germany was excluded from larger politics, in the same way as France, whose creeping disease, *absolutism*, was transferred by the 'great' Hohenzollerns to Prussia.

"Joseph was the last German Emperor. After his great ventures in Belgium and in the Balkans had been thwarted by Prussia, Germany could still venture to fight for Russia and England, or, with stricter adherence to purely continental aims, to occupy once again the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, which Frederick had assigned to the French and, as in 1878, to play the part of honest broker. If, however, for instance under Frederick II.'s gifted descendant, William II., Germany should once more embark upon greater world politics, she will expose herself to a 'nose-bleeding' which, as her friend, I can only hope will be less exhausting and at the same time—in the judgment of experts in such matters—no less sublimely romantic and heroic than that nose-bleeding to which France exposed herself, when she ventured under Napoleon to resume the lost fight against England. On St. Helena Napoleon hit upon almost as many new ideas as did the occupant of Friedrichsruhe.

"Nothing is more stimulating to a statesman with pet ideas than long holidays. The amazing English constitution makes it much easier for statesmen who have made mistakes to take a holiday than do the absolutist constitutions of the continent, where 'royal sacrifices' take the form not of ministerial changes, but—rather wantonly and arbitrarily—of tragedies, often with innumerable corpses.

"Moreover it is possible to approve more generously, to disapprove more frankly and to criticise more pointedly, if the individuals concerned are not enveloped in the halo of a greatness bestowed by the grace of God, but make their entries and exits as the leaders of a party.

"Though in Berlin Goethe was disgusted at hearing 'the great man discussed by his own rascallions,' he was the last man



to have deemed this greatness above criticism. In fact he went to Berlin in the capacity of a 'conspirator' against this 'greatness.' But Goethe's feeling was very much that of Lessing, who 'refused an advantageous service (that is to say, appointment) because, so he declared, the King of Prussia only paid those who were his dependents and worked as such. For this reason he declined the professorship in Königsberg; and also because the professor of rhetoric had to deliver an annual panegyric.' (77) Could anything be more repulsive than this Prussian 'service,' these professors who deliver an annual panegyric on Frederick the Great, who extol him as a great statesman, and then, in their narrow dogmatic fashion—accuse him of blind adherence to pet ideas, injustice, deficient understanding and self-will, as did Koser and other of Frederick II.'s rascallions, before they reel off the next compulsory panegyric? Goethe showed how justly he estimated Frederician freedom of thought, when he declared: 'I have not uttered in the Prussian states a single word that they could not put in print,' (78) but he was more modest in his computation of what could be printed than those 'rascallions,' who still deliver their annual panegyric. When Goethe, after a brief visit, left the capital of the 'great man' for ever, he seems to have felt very much as did Lessing, who, eleven years earlier, wrote to Frederick's epic poet, Gleim: 'I hope that I shall not find it difficult to forget Berlin. My friends there will always remain dear to me, always my friends, but everything else, from the greatest to the smallest—but I remember, you do not like to hear any criticism of this queen of cities——What was I doing in that wretched *galère*?'

"These words are interpreted by every Prussian historian as an admission by Lessing that Frederick was the 'greatest' and Frederick's capital the 'queen of cities.' In this 'queen of cities' Frederick's young friend, Lucchesini, was privileged to remain about as many years as Goethe—described by Frederick as the author of 'loathsome platitudes'—remained there hours. Poor Goethe! Fortunate Lucchesini!"

*EXTRACTS FROM THE THIRD  
CONVERSATION*

FREDERICK II. AND HIS FREDERSDORF,  
GOETHE, VOLTAIRE, AND WOMEN

*Zum Zipfel, zum Zapfel,  
Zum Scherber, zum Pfriemen,  
Bei der Jungfer Christinen  
Zum Dachfenster rein !*

FREDERICK THE GREAT AS CROWN PRINCE.



## FREDERICK II. AND WOMEN

THE following discussion developed many of the ideas contained in the first conversation, but it followed directly upon the second, that on Lucchesini.

Manfred: "The exquisite wit of Voltaire, whose prophet Frederick II. would gladly have been all through his life and as whose unworthy ambassador Lucchesini presents himself to Goethe, is referred to in one of Goethe's letters to Frau von Stein. In 1784 Goethe wrote to his beloved from Gotha: 'Yesterday evening the mistress of the robes lent me under pledge of utmost secrecy, *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de Mr. de Voltaire écrits par lui-même*. It is reported that this little book is to be printed. It will make a terrific sensation, but I am delighted that you will be able to read it. It is as brilliant and witty as anything he has written. He writes of the King of Prussia as Suetonius wrote of the scandals of the Caesars, and if the eyes of the world could and should be opened in regard to kings and princes, these pages would be a precious ointment for that purpose. But people will read them as a satire on women, lay them aside, and bow before their lords as submissively as ever.' In the next letter Goethe again refers to the book: 'To the horror of the orthodox, there is a rumour that the *Mémoires* of Voltaire are to be printed. I am very glad; because you will be able to read them. I shall get one of the first copies, and send it to you at once. You will find that it is as though a god (Momus perhaps)—a rascal of a god—were writing of a king and of worldly greatness. This is in fact noticeable in all the products of Voltaire's wit, and it is particularly striking in this instance. Not a spark of human feeling, of sympathy or of decency. On the other hand, a light and soaring wit and a sureness of aim that are enchanting. I say

*soaring* wit and not *sublime* wit. He might be compared with an air-balloon that soars aloft in virtue of the particular gas it contains, and sees below it plains where we see mountains.' (In his *Maxims*, Goethe explains what a revolution the invention of the air-ship brought about in the thought of his age.)

"Is it not amazing that Goethe should be able to describe so well that genius, whose breath intoxicated Frederick II. and whose nature was marked by the lack of just that decency—that is to say, conventionality and kindliness—which inclines a writer, in important historical narrations, to content himself with the *fables convenues*? And is it not amusing to hear Goethe speak of the 'light and soaring wit and sureness of aim that are enchanting' of a book, which Prussian historians only refer to with execrations? I have been told that the Prussian censorship still prohibits German editions of the work extolled by Goethe. And Frau von Stein, to whom Goethe looks forward to sending it? What did she say about it?" This thought seemed to cause Manfred great amusement.

I was not familiar with Voltaire's *Mémoires*, and I interjected: "Is it really possible that Goethe is here alluding to that book, in which Voltaire in his thirst for revenge was guilty of the most shameless libel on the morals of Frederick the Great?"

Manfred: "Yes, indeed, Goethe is so shameless as to admire that notorious book described by Koser (79) as a 'base and malicious caricature'!"

I expressed my astonishment: "Was not the stern condemnation pronounced on Voltaire by Goethe in another context provoked by Voltaire's outrageous insult to the great King? Goethe says something to the following effect: 'Voltaire, who had always made a speciality of slandering royal personages, proved himself here too a true Thersites. Had I been Ulysses, he should have bent his back under my sceptre'."

Manfred: "Not at all! Goethe made that remark when he was a young hothead, and because Voltaire—and, of course, Voltaire's obedient pupil, the great Frederick—had not expressed sufficient veneration for Shakespeare. This was long before Goethe himself had become a courtier and had realised why Voltaire was loth to slander even the most infamous royal

personages, if they had a 'hundred thousand men.' Remembering that Frederick had once asked a malcontent: 'Has he a hundred thousand men?' Voltaire said: 'I have entrusted my dispute with Frederick to three or four hundred thousand soldiers.' The first attempt made by these soldiers failed miserably at Rossbach, regarding which Voltaire had his own ideas. Voltaire, who had celebrated the victory of Fontenoy in verse and was at the same time a declared enemy of all wars, had in fact, expressly for the conflict with Frederick II., invented a war-machine, a sort of armoured battle-car,\* which he hoped would be a valuable addition to the strength of the French cavalry. But Voltaire's friend, the Duc de Richelieu, disdainfully refused to make use of this invention. Yet, even without this war-machine, the soldiers of Voltaire and of the revolution hatched by Voltaire had then, under better leadership, won a brilliant victory at Jena. Without Prussian flogging! Was it not a victory of Voltaire's wit over Frederick's flogging system? It was just about the time of Jena, hence twenty years after Goethe had first communicated to Frau von Stein his delight at Voltaire's scandals concerning the King of Prussia, that Goethe openly expressed his appreciation of Voltaire, and this in such enthusiastic terms that Frederick the Great himself could hardly have furnished warmer testimony to the genius of his admired reader. Goethe at that time referred to Voltaire as the 'best of all the French writers' (Frederick would certainly have omitted two words 'the French') and enumerated some fifty virtues which he admired in Voltaire—genius, sublimity, feeling, purity, and forty-five others."

Hegemann: "You certainly have an amazing faculty of whitewashing what before seemed black as ink! Sublimity, feeling, purity, in the man who dared to traduce Frederick the Great?"

Manfred: "Pardon me, I was only quoting Goethe's words, but I see what you mean, and cannot think the worse of Goethe, because he did not share your resentment."

Hegemann: "Do you then approve Voltaire's calumnies?"

\* Perhaps similar to the present-day tanks.

Do you doubt that they were simply invented to satisfy Voltaire's thirst for revenge ? ”

Manfred : “ That is what the Royal Prussian Academy of the Sciences tries to make out, when ‘ it celebrates the memory of its great restorer in accordance with the statutes,’ and a Du Bois-Reymond reveals the nature and essence of his defence of Frederick the Great by introductory words such as : ‘ Again the world gazes in admiration at the legendary figure of the heroic emperor, who cradles in his arms the great-grandson born of this marriage. . . .’ But I believe that the spirit of the inveterate mocker of Sanssouci would very contemptuously command these Prussian academicians, if they had ears to hear, to read his *Eloge de Voltaire*, in which he reminded the Academy after Voltaire's death that : ‘ *M. de Voltaire valoit seul toute une académie.*’ Still more probably, *Fredericus redivivus* would send the whole Academy to the devil, if he learnt that its gates were open to the despised Germans. What would he have said had he heard that Du Bois-Reymond, a member of the institution which Frederick intended to be French, had had the bad taste to apologise in 1870 for his French origin. And this academician believed himself called upon to undertake Frederick's defence against such men as Macaulay or Voltaire himself ? Did not old Fritz say every morning ? : ‘ *Divin Voltaire, ora pro nobis !*’ Are you aware that the *Scandala* of Suetonius, with which the admiring Goethe compared Voltaire's *Mémoires*, were read by Frederick II., together with Voltaire's *History of the Century of Louis XV.*, only a few days before his death ? ”

Hegemann : “ I was not aware of it.”

Manfred : “ Why, you speak almost as a Prussian historian feels compelled to speak of that suspicious Frenchman, Voltaire. What Voltaire relates of Frederick II.'s innocent follies you call calumny. But when the worthy Liselotte of the Pfalz describes how Prince Eugene and the great Turenne, when they were young men, used ‘ often to play the woman,’ and sell themselves to their comrades for a taler when they were short of money ; when she relates that the great Condé and Marshal Villars, whom Frederick II. once placed above Alexander, threw

quite accustomed during their campaigns to intercourse with boys; then she is merely proving her German frankness. Ranke declares, by the way, that she was free from all deceit, and the French duke, Saint-Simon, speaks of her as 'brave, thoroughly German, open-hearted, frank, good, benevolent, noble and great'."

Hegemann: "The French moral depravity which she describes was only too apparent, and could not be denied."

Manfred: "French! The same Liselotte relates how the German ambassador, Zinzendorf, spread this 'mode' in Paris, and Frederick II.'s famous protégé, Dr. Bardt, declares that all the boys at the royal school, Schulpforta, were 'sullied by the Greek vice.' I fancy that those people who get excited over Voltaire's stories of Frederick II. are the victims of a misunderstanding; they perceive an insult to Frederick II., where Frederick himself would probably have perceived a compliment. Bismarck is less prudish; he has a great deal of good to say of Frederick II., but he refers unabashed to Frederick's 'need of approbation, which early displayed itself in small things. In his correspondence with Count Seckendorff, he tries to impress this old reprobate by stories of his sexual excesses and consequent maladies.' If Bismarck was forced to this conclusion, is it improbable that Frederick too dallied with the more distinguished mode? the mode which not only found adherents in the environment of Louis XV.—Louis was two years older than Frederick—but which perhaps seemed to the young French-loving Frederick worthy of emulation as a quality of the admired French generals. How much importance Frederick attached to his observance of this fashion is another matter; but that he did dally with it seems to me neither a presumptuous nor a terrible suggestion. Any one who feels shocked at this 'vice' must remember that Frederick was not shocked at it, but in his literary compositions and again shortly before his death alluded to it in almost jovial terms. The Prince de Ligne, who has drawn one of the most illuminating portraits of the old King, relates that 'it was very amusing,' when Frederick began to speak of the discoveries that he had made in the letters of Liselotte of the Pfalz about Prince Eugene. And, if the famous



Berlin Professor, Roethe, is correct in his assertion that German literature dates from the victory of Rossbach, doubtless it began with Frederick's pornographic hymn of victory, composed in 1757."

Hegemann: "So you do not think that the image of the great King is disfigured by Voltaire's filthy innuendoes?"

Manfred: "Is Frederick's image so easily marred? Any one who wants to admire it, ought to be able to laugh where Frederick himself laughed. Filthy? Even his admirers admit that he really was very dirty. Frederick once said to de Catt: 'One thing might certainly be better, namely, my face, which is always grimed with Spanish snuff. It is an accursed habit that I have formed. Tell me yourself, do I not look something of a pig? Tell me quite frankly.' De Catt answered: 'I must confess, Your Majesty, that both your face and your uniform are smothered in tobacco'; and Frederick concluded: 'Well, Sir, that is what I mean by something of a pig.' Frederick II., who left behind him a hundred-and-thirty snuff-boxes worth several million marks, did not push the costly Spanish tobacco into his nose with the tips of his fingers, but shovelled it in by the handful, so that the tobacco collected from his handkerchiefs represented a source of income to his valet. The valet probably did not see anything disgusting in this, and who would in fact admire less on this account an otherwise admirable man? Frederick laughed at it. When in 1770 he visited Joseph II., he came, in honour of the Emperor, dressed entirely in white, which made the snuff with which he bespattered himself particularly conspicuous. Frederick said laughingly: '*Je ne suis pas assez propre pour vous. Je ne suis pas digne de porter vos couleurs.*' (This was the account of the Prince de Ligne.) This seems to me amiable rather than repugnant. It is moreover surprising to find that here too Frederick had an exemplar. It was not as a politician, but as a snuff-taker that he trod in the footprints of Prince Eugene, whom he so honoured. Let me read you something from Liselotte. . . ."

Manfred soon found the volume he sought, and continued: "Here Liselotte writes on March 19th, 1711, to the

Electress of Hanover : ' It is no wonder that Prince Eugene is smutched with tobacco ; his nostrils are too wide to hold the tobacco.' And in the same letter she says with her never-failing candour : ' If I smell snuff for long, I feel sick ; I am very glad that Your Highness too detests it ; I keep to my old German ways, and do not take up any foreign fashions'."

I could not help laughing. Manfred followed my example and continued : " I honestly confess to you that I too detest these un-German vices. I rejoice that you are a non-smoker, and I should, God knows ! have no objection if the euphemistic question : Do you smoke ? were gradually replaced by the more honest : Do you stink ? None the less I entreat my friends to smoke, if I know that they cannot be happy without this perpetual self-pollution. Far from despising Frederick II. for his dirty snuff-taking, I am inclined to admire him because he refrained from poisoning the air in the manner which seems indispensable to most victims of the tobacco-habit at the present day. This remarkable prince is by no means entirely reprehensible. Even Goethe saw in this snuff-taking only a dirty habit, whereas he predicted the most dire consequences from the abominable vice of smoking : ' After two or three generations,' he said, ' we shall see what all these beer-soakers and chimney-stacks have made of Germany. The effects will first be apparent in the dulness, ugliness and poverty of our literature, which will none the less be admired by these smokers and soakers.' My hair stands on end when I reflect how correct Goethe was once again in his prophecy, and I am only distressed when I recall that in my native country of America the Indian vice of smoking is indulged in to an even more disastrous extent than in Germany. Goethe had also no liking for spirits, and it must certainly be a satisfaction to a German to find something like unanimity among the leading minds of his nation at any rate in regard to these more or less external things. Listen to the reply of the great Frederick when he was requested in 1775 to grant a concession for the building of an arrack and rum factory : ' May it go to the devil. I shall not allow the nasty poisonous stuff to be made or to be drunk'." (80)

Among the numerous guests expected in the afternoon were a number of well-known writers, and I was present at a remarkable discussion, which formed a sequel to the conversation of the morning, but of which I was unfortunately unable to preserve more than Manfred's remarks.

As I was making my way to the terrace, where tea was usually served, I saw Manfred standing with Thomas Mann at the open French windows of the library, and, responding to Manfred's invitation to join them, I found them discussing the question how far reliable information regarding Frederick's youth was to be found in the Memoirs of his sister, Wilhelmina, and other sources. They spoke of the two natural daughters of Augustus the Strong, whom Wilhelmina gave as mistresses to her sixteen-year old brother, and of Frederick's love-adventures in Küstrin, Ruppín and Rheinsberg.

Thomas Mann mentioned Seckendorff's remark to Prince Eugene: "that his physical powers were very inferior to his vicious inclinations, so that the Crown Prince in his gallantries sought rather for vain notoriety than for satisfaction of a sinful propensity," and Thomas Mann added the remark: "However that may be, it is certain that all these affairs had no connections with sentiment or the heart or passion in any high or deep sense. When he was quite a young man, Frederick already declared that he only wanted enjoyment from women and that afterwards he despised them. He was never in love. Then occurred a misadventure; there are rumours of a subsequent operation—and from this time on there was something, as it were, mutilated in his nature; he turned his back on all voluptuousness; woman had concluded her far from honourable rôle in his life."

Manfred: "As regards the 'operation,' I fancy that that inexhaustible informant, Nicolai—one of those faithful Berliners who revered old Fritz the more, the more he despised them—proved convincingly that this was an invention of the hypochondriacal Doctor Zimmermann. This same physician of Frederick II., who had previously played such an important part in connection with Goethe's relations to Frau von Stein, did, however, furnish other details regarding the admired king, which are more edifying as well as more trustworthy than the story of

the 'operation'—at any rate more trustworthy where he is able to cite Frederick's own words."

Manfred drew out from the bookshelves with his characteristic promptitude the third volume of Ritter von Zimmermann's *Fragments concerning Frederick the Great* (1790), and read the following extracts: "' Frederick contracted a venereal disease shortly before his betrothal, as stated in the fifth chapter of these fragments, where the grave consequences of this disease are described. We also know from this chapter that Frederick, from fear of his father, could not engage in amorous intrigues, but had to make shift now and then with prostitutes. What is not known is that sometimes he fell into good hands among such persons. Frederick the Great says, in a composition which he himself entrusted to the printers in 1771: 'I recall with satisfaction (may philosophy pardon me for this) the glorious moments which I once spent in the arms of a young girl. She was not insatiable, but said to me with sweet gentleness: Dear little hero, you will make yourself ill, and then you will no longer be fit for war'." That is Zimmermann's account.

"Moreover Seckendorff's opinion expressed above is contradicted by Frederick's profligacy during the Rhine campaign. At that time, when he was twenty-two years of age, he seems to have thought *l'amour et la gloire* just as good a motto as the *Pro gloria et patria* to which he is said to have afterwards devoted himself exclusively."

Hegemann: "I seem to remember that Reinhold Koser suggested a spiritual affinity between the Crown Prince Frederick and the youthful Goethe, between the circle of friends at Rheinsberg and that at Frankfurt."

Manfred laughed: "A great deal of misleading evidence can be adduced in support of this affinity. 'If I cannot read or write, I am like those inveterate snuff-takers, who are beside themselves with anxiety and ransack their pockets over and over again, if some one has taken their snuff-box.' These are the words of the prince who was later an inveterate snuff-taker and the victor in thirteen battles, and not of the poet who abhorred tobacco and who wrote: 'If I cannot reflect and write, life for me ceases to be life.' When Frederick II. tells

de Catt that in Rheinsberg his passionate devotion to his books made him almost sleepless, we may recall Goethe's words : ' About midnight I set to work ' or ' In vain I try to check this impulse that surges in my breast day and night ' ; and when the youthful Frederick sets to work to collect German folk-songs, he reminds us not of Charlemagne, who is said to have done the same thing, but of a pupil of Herder who would fain be thought a genius. You remember that Herder advised his young Strassburgers to collect the German folk-songs in Alsace. That would have been a worthier task for Frederick II. than his spiteful attack on the Austrian rear when they were about to achieve a glorious reconquest of Alsace in 1744, thereby securing Alsace to the French for the ensuing hundred years or probably for ever.

" That Frederick should have obstinately determined to be a poet in another language than his own mother-tongue seems to me to prove that one cannot speak of a relationship between the young Frederick and the young Goethe, unless one should happen to be a Berlin High School teacher. The descriptions of Frederick II. as a young man are so numerous and so unanimous that one cannot seriously doubt that he suffered from certain moral weaknesses which in Goethe were either absent or had been overcome by rigorous self-discipline. Consider how Frederick, on his return from the Rhine campaign in 1734 humiliated to the point of tears his favourite sister, Wilhelmina, who adored him, how he darkly hinted to her that he would astonish the world when once he became king. That agrees too closely with the reports of the younger Seckendorff regarding Frederick's hints shortly after to Schulenburg and Wartensleben that he would begin his reign with *éclat* : ' *Oui, mon cher comitchen, . . . il y a assez de plaisir d'être l'unique roi de Prusse.*' Or when his sister complains of the unfeeling arrogance with which Frederick spoke of her little court and of all and sundry, this agrees so closely with the reports received from the French ambassadors (for instance, Du Mesnil's report : ' It pleased him to speak well of no one, to condemn the whole world and to admire himself '), or those which de Catt left of the young and Lucchesini of the old Frederick, that the picture

has to be taken as authentic, the picture of the overbearing man who hates to be contradicted, who abuses the advantage of his birth, and—yes, it has to be admitted—who brags detestably from his earliest youth to the last days of his old age. De Catt's memoirs invariably reflect that spirit of sincere humility and reverence which the young Swiss experienced in the presence of the great lord of battles who was thirteen years his senior. The significance of certain remarks from de Catt's pen would be clear and unmistakable, even if they did not harmonise so strikingly with those made by Lucchesini and others. Listen, for instance, to this memorandum from the suicidal days of the Seven Years' War, written on the very day on which Frederick regretted that 'this ill-fated war' compelled him to leave the internal 'administrative affairs to take their own course'; 'I have no time left to think of and direct all these things.' Of the same day de Catt reports: 'After dinner, the King played the flute for a quarter of an hour—to aid his digestion, as he said. Then he returned to his literary labours of the morning or revised his previous works and the things he had written during the campaign. At five o'clock I was sent for and stayed until seven. During the two hours that I spent with him the King spoke of his literary labours of the morning and afternoon, and then read to me a funeral oration or a philosophic work. This gave rise to comments, sometimes even to debates. The rules of debating were often not very strictly adhered to. The King allowed complete freedom of speech, but appropriated the lion's share to himself, so that the freedom so graciously conferred frequently amounted to nothing at all. Either he refused the desired definitions, or he declared a definition to be bad, so soon as it convicted him of a contradiction in his reasoning; or he cut short a remark with the simple statement: 'That is untrue. . . .' Another time the King explained to his reader the dismissal of a not unworthy officer, which had been regretted in the army, with the words: 'I have my own fixed rules, from which I make no departure, and I find that this suits me very well.' Who has not heard already from a certain type of dogmatist, those words: 'and I find that this suits me very well!' Who, after such revelations, could doubt the accuracy of that

self-portrait, intended to be witty, which Frederick drew of himself, when he proposed in 1755 to journey incognito through Holland in the guise of a 'court musician of the King of Poland' and declare that he could not endure the King of Prussia. 'Why?' asked the thirty-year-old scholar of the forty-three year-old court musician, who spoke 'with such a ready tongue and so self-confident a tone of politics, philosophy, religion, various European governments and various kings.' And the royal court musician answered: 'Because a king who busies himself with literary composition is an exacting creature, with whom it is difficult to get on and who neglects for the sake of his studies those affairs of state, which none the less have the first claim to his care and attention. . . .' Any one who likes this picture of Frederick II. as a traveller incognito will be amused also at the report which the Stadtholder of Strassburg compiled in 1740 immediately after the visit of the King of Prussia, who was then travelling as 'Graf Dufour.' (81) Frederick invited a number of French officers whom he did not know from the *café militaire* at Strassburg, made tactless remarks about the French army and was saved from a duel by his kingly rank. There then occurred an unpleasant and not completely explained incident with the Stadtholder, after which he returned in high vexation from Strassburg to Prussia. That was Frederick II.'s visit to Paris, of which he liked to talk later on.

"Any one who is interested in Frederick's incognito exploits may like to compare them with Goethe's adventures of a similar nature; for instance, his visits in disguise to Professor Höpfner at Giessen, or to Plessing during the Harz journey in winter, which from all accounts—not only from Goethe's account—are correctly described in Goethe's own words: 'My name is Weber; I am a painter; I have studied law; I am very polite to everyone and am everywhere very well received.' And when Goethe's curiosity impelled him to pay some visits, disguised as an Englishman, to the relatives of Cagliostro at Palermo, his every movement was marked by such a distinguished and winning modesty and courtesy that one cannot read some of the passages of the account without inward emotion. And yet the poet in Palermo was still five years younger than

the very much less distinguished poetry-writing king in Holland. Frederick II. lacked that touch of redeeming kindness which is characteristic of Goethe.

"And, as regards the connection of the Rheinsberg circle of friends with the apostles of the 'Storm and Stress' movement who surrounded Goethe, the Berlin professors seem to me to have fallen into an absurd error. Erich Schmidt may say: 'Free from love for women, Frederick's nature felt a most passionate craving for friendship'; but Bismarck seems to me to have shown greater penetration in discerning the nature of this 'passionate craving for friendship,' when he explained the 'intercourse with foreign wits' by Frederick's 'craving for approval,' which does indeed seem to have been very passionate."

Thomas Mann: "Maria Theresa had a childish and mysterious name for Frederick, which seems to indicate that a penetrating womanly instinct betrayed his nature to her. She never called him anything but 'the bad man'."

Manfred: "Never? Frederick's faithful Koser himself relates (82) that in 1778 she said of Frederick: 'This great man is after all, if one looks at him a little more closely, very small and an utter charlatan'."

Thomas Mann: "But at any rate she did for a long time call him the 'bad man.' And so, in fact, he was, and as much 'man' as he was 'bad.' The mysteries of sex are profound and will never be completely revealed. Do you suppose that this King could not endure women because he was such a bad man, or was he such a bad man because he could not endure women? That is hard to unravel. But that his badness was connected with his dislike of women seems certain."

Manfred: "But you questioned whether Frederick was a 'man,' when you referred to his much-disputed castration? No matter! Maria Theresa—who was a royal lady—involuntarily did Frederick II. too much honour; he was, I believe, less bad than uncouth and uncontrolled. Have the women anything to do with that? Let me first recall Frederick II.'s mother. She hardly stood on the same moral level as the mother of Maria Theresa, and she could not hold a candle to Goethe's mother. The family life of Frederick's parents was



inconceivably lacking in dignity. When his ambitious mother had her amazing trousseau prepared in Paris, Louis XIV. desired that many German princes might be in a position to enrich the merchants of his capital in the same way; but, as a queen, she was generally deep in gaming debts, and of her mother's love of intrigue Wilhelmina draws a picture which is still very repulsive, even when one has made that '20-50 per cent' deduction which Carlyle considers necessary in reading her memoirs.

"Moreover Frederick II. was not rooted in any truly national life. He was unable to express himself with perfect ease in any language; in language and in nationality he was homeless and irresponsible. Is not lack of a language equivalent to lack of a country, that is to say, poverty in the worst sense of the word? (83) I should like to put a counter-question to you: Was Frederick II. unable to endure women, because he did not understand their language, or did he never learn a language perfectly, because he had no lady-love to instruct him in it? 'Give thy paw and promise never to do it again' is a specimen of the elegant style of Frederick's love-poems. His father soon had to promise Frederick's father-in-law to make the Crown Prince 'more attentive to the fulfilment of his duty as a lover'."

Thomas Mann: "Something *mutilated* in his nature. A profound misogyny was henceforth an inseparable ingredient of his nature. It is impossible to picture him in a tender situation; it would be absurd."

I could not help recalling our conversation on the Vesuvius excursion, and I fancied that Manfred gave me a wink. In order to initiate Thomas Mann into our secret, I repeated, slightly modified, Nietzsche's words: "What great philosopher was ever married? The philosopher of Sanssouci was not, the patriarch of Ferney was not, and, what is more, no one can conceive of them as married."

Manfred: "It is desirable in every incident of Frederick's life to seek a precedent in the life of his honoured master, Voltaire. The contradictory elements in Frederick's nature are partially explained by the fact that he tried to emulate at

the same time the daring wit of Voltaire's *Pucelle* and the sublime dignity of the *Henriade*."

At this moment Georg Brandes entered Ellis's library, where this discussion was taking place. "Was Voltaire a woman-hater?" said Manfred laughingly, as he shook hands with the seventy-year-old scholar, in whose vast literary knowledge he could trust. The victim of this sudden attack was kind enough to outline to us some fascinating descriptions of Voltaire's women-friends, which my powers of memory are inadequate to reproduce in their entirety. I select arbitrarily a few passages which related to Frederick the Great.

Georg Brandes described, among other things, the great Adrienne Lecouvreur.

"Fifty years after her death she was still declared to be the greatest actress of all time. She must have been one of the truly great enchantresses, a tragic genius. She combined supreme beauty with goodness of heart; she was prudent and sincere and without subterfuge or vanity. She was Voltaire's mistress, before she met Maurice of Saxony, and from that time lavished on the latter the greatest passion of her life in the capacity both of a mistress and of a loving sister."

Among the guests was the famous actress, Cécile Sorel, about whose brilliant personality there hovers the memory of the murdered president of the French Republic, whose corpse is said to have been found in her bed. This successor of Adrienne on the boards of the Comédie française was chattering in a group which had formed near ours. Brandes called her attention to the fact that we were talking of her great predecessor and of the victor of Prague, Fontenoy and Raucourt. Cécile Sorel showed herself to be no less well-read than Adrienne Lecouvreur is said to have been. She has in fact published a fascinating little book about Adrienne. She replied:

"Was it not Adrienne who educated the great Maurice, and transformed this 'Sarmatian,' who at first fought against France under Prince Eugene, into a worthy champion of French military honour? Was it not Adrienne who cultivated the intelligence—so far as this was possible—of this breaker of female hearts, and who taught him how to speak and how to

clothe himself ? who transformed the Achilles of Homer into the Achilles of Racine ? And, in a fateful hour, did Adrienne display the least hesitation in sacrificing her whole fortune for the sake of her beloved ? ”

Brandes assented, and explained to us : “ Adrienne’s unselfish devotion went so far that she did not even oppose the separation from her beloved : Maurice of Saxony hoped at that time to achieve in Courland his heart’s desire of being a sovereign ruler. Adrienne gave him all the money she could get together, namely, 40,000 francs, for the purpose of financing his conquest of the throne of Courland.”

Cécile Sorel : “ For this lordly adventurer love was only sensuality, not affinity of souls. He wanted a kingdom not a heart. And Adrienne, in whom maternal sentiment was combined with passionate love, consoled this great spoilt child for the disappointments which fate had inflicted on him. In virtue of all that she gave him and that he was incapable of appreciating, she knew herself to be one with him. He never left her in any doubt of his faithlessness, and she suffered without complaining, and loved him until she was poisoned by a jealous rival aspirant for the love of the great Marshal of Saxony. It was he who helped her to reach the supreme heights of her art, for he gave her the happiness—of suffering.”

Manfred : “ The happiness of women ? ”

Cécile Sorel : “ The happiness of artists ! ”

Cécile Sorel was claimed by other admirers and drawn away from us. Manfred looked after her, and said thoughtfully : “ While the brilliant bastard, Maurice, contended in vain for a crown, Frederick II. found one already in his cradle, and none the less no Adrienne or other woman ever loved him or taught him to speak. Even in the land which he was born to rule, he remained more a foreigner than did Maurice of Saxony in his new country, France, who is proud to name him hers, although as a Protestant he had to be buried in the freer soil of the old imperial city of Strassburg.”

Brandes then told us about the redhaired Comtesse de Rupelmonde, Voltaire’s mistress, of whose services to the poet even Frederick the Great spoke with warm appreciation, and with

whom Voltaire set off on his triumphal journey to the Congress of Cambrai.

Manfred : " That was the same congress of 1724, at which England and France tried, to the delight of Frederick II., (84) to frustrate the successful foundation of the Ostend Company."

Georg Brandes : " And the same lighthearted Rupelmonde, to whom Voltaire dedicated a mystical religious poem." Manfred recalled the mystical poem, 'The Secrets,' which Goethe dedicated to Frau von Stein.

Manfred : " So ' the secrets ' of the Rupelmonde Venus too were religious ! Even if they have nothing of the rosicrucianism of the ' secrets ' of Frau von Stein. The rosicrucians swayed the Prussian King, Frederick William II., but the religious wisdom of the Rupelmonde swayed Frederick the Great, and, curiously enough, gave Frau von Stein too a religious dogma, for the deism with which—in contrast to her orthodox mother—she was familiar may probably be traced back by a very roundabout route rather to Voltaire-Rupelmonde than direct to Locke."

Georg Brandes : " Voltaire's pious poem to the redhaired Venus contains the basic idea of the *Henriade*, which won the rapturous admiration of Voltaire's contemporaries, and of which Frederick the Great said that one stanza of it was worth more than the whole of the *Iliad*."

Then Emilie du Châtelet was mentioned, as the mistress of Voltaire, on whom Frederick the Great bestowed special praise.

" Did he know much about her ? " asked one of the listeners.

Manfred : " You are right. Frederick's testimony should be accepted with caution. But Voltaire was his guest for three years, so that he got his information from the best source. The King becomes almost lyrical, and it sounds like the legend of the good fairy, when he speaks of her to the Prussian Academy in his *Eloge de Voltaire*." With his characteristic and amazing promptitude Manfred had in his hand a copy of Frederick's *Eloge de Voltaire*, from which he read the following passages :

" ' At that time there was living in France a lady famous alike for her beauty and for her love of the arts and sciences. You will guess, Gentlemen, that we are about to speak of the

celebrated Marquise du Châtelet. . . . Her friendship for Voltaire led the Marquise to turn her back on Leibniz and his witty novels and instead to apply herself to Locke, whose philosophy is less calculated merely to gratify the curiosity than to satisfy the demands of a lively intelligence. . . . Soon the country-seat of the Marquise became the home of the two philosophic friends. There they wrote, each independently, the most various works, which they then communicated to one another, in order, by mutual criticism, to bring their creations nearer to the highest perfection. There Voltaire composed his tragedies—*Zaire*, *Alzire*, *Mérope*, *Sémiramis*, *Catiline* and *Electra*. . . . For the special use of the Marquise du Châtelet he wrote his *Essai de l'Histoire Universelle*. . . . This work, which is illumined with the flame of his surpassing genius, is not calculated to familiarize a novice with historical science, but rather to recall the most important facts to the memory of those already acquainted with the subject. . . . Voltaire was so inseparably attached to Madame du Châtelet that even the glitter of the court of Versailles could not make him faithless to the rustic retreat of Cirey. The two friends there enjoyed tranquilly such happiness as is allotted to man. When this beautiful union was dissolved by the death of the Marquise, it was a shattering blow to Monsieur de Voltaire, who needed all his philosophy to aid him in supporting it. At that time, when he was striving to master his grief, he was summoned to the Court of Prussia. The King, who had come to know him in the year 1740, longed to have near him this rare and surpassing genius. In the year 1750 Monsieur de Voltaire came to Berlin.' Thus did Frederick the Great write of the 'divine' Emilie."

Georg Brandes: "Yes, for ten years, until the death of the Marquise, Voltaire resisted all entreaties, and Frederick II. finally had recourse to very unscrupulous means in order to make France impossible for Voltaire and compel him to migrate to the more tolerant Prussia."

Manfred: "To the temporarily or apparently more tolerant Prussia. Compared with Voltaire's migration to Berlin, Goethe's migration to Weimar was the affair of a moment. Goethe was not held back by any woman; he was not even held

back by Lili, of whom he liked to believe shortly before his death : ' She was the only woman whom I deeply and truly loved ; I may even say that she was perhaps the last '."

Georg Brandes : " But what an astonishing woman this Emilie must have been !

*Tout lui plâit, tout convient à son vaste génie,  
Les livres, les bijoux, les compas, les pompons,  
Les vers, les diamants, les biribi, l'optique,  
L'algèbre, les soupers, le latin, les jupons,  
L'opéra, les procès, le bal et la physique.*

Thus does Voltaire describe her ! "

Another member of the group asked : " And what did her intelligence really amount to ? Are the praises which Voltaire and Frederick lavish on her merely the usual compliments to a woman who is ' pleased, when clever men speak, that she can understand what they mean,' or . . . ? "

Georg Brandes : " No, she was the intellectual equal of the great men with whom she associated, much as the great mathematician, Sonia Kowalewski, was the equal of her brilliant teacher, Weierstrass. Madame du Châtelet was not content merely to converse after supper with Maupertuis, Voltaire and Clairaut on the most abstruse mathematical or physical questions, until the wax candles had burnt down into their sockets ; she also found time to write books on physics, to understand and translate Newton and to compete behind the backs of her learned friends for the prize of the French Academy with a work, which was placed by the judges on a level with Voltaire's, and which, as appeared forty years later, in making the original suggestion that the colours of the spectrum develop an unequal degree of heat, came astonishingly nearer to the truth than the then overrated work of the famous Euler. It was unjust to the divine Emilie to accuse her of unwomanliness or of calculating coldness. In spite of her great gifts she was a passionate woman. Her attempted suicide, when Voltaire's predecessor proved faithless, was celebrated in verse by contemporary poets. It was not easy to play the part at once of an unmarried and a married woman with Voltaire. She had to exercise all her diplomatic genius to save him from the consequences of his

really dangerous literary audacities and vanities, and she was bitterly anxious on his behalf when, as often happened, he disappeared for considerable periods without leaving a trace. It is not surprising that in the course of a decade her feelings for him wore themselves out, though no other woman was ever able to eclipse her in his affections. There are hundreds of the most delightful lines, in which Voltaire in poetry and in prose tries to express the unspeakable happiness which he owed to Emilie du Châtelet.

*Esprit, raison, beaux yeux, charmant visage,  
Fleur de santé, doux loisir, jours sereins,  
Vous avez tout, c'est là votre partage.  
Moi, je parais un être infortuné,  
De la nature enfant abandonné,  
Et n'avoir rien semble mon apanage.  
Mais vous m'aimez, les dieux m'ont tout donné."*

Manfred: "Similarly Goethe's Epimetheus speaks of Pandora:

'Compare the best with her; how poor it seems!'"

Georg Brandes: "Voltaire declared over and over again that he first knew happiness at Cirey. Rarely has a writer so extolled a woman as did Voltaire the Marquise. One must in fact go back to Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio to find such a constant and humble glorification of one and the same woman. One must go back still further, to the eleventh century troubadours of Provence, to find this special type of adoration, the expression of a love, in which the intellectual element predominates. Voltaire was very far from being a troubadour, but in his idolatry of Emilie there is something that is sprung in a direct line from Provençal lyric poetry."

Manfred asked laughingly: "Whether Voltaire would not perhaps have been a man after Frau von Stein's own heart? She resented Goethe's inconstancy; no woman ever outshone Emilie in Voltaire's eyes. Is it not refreshing to see those mockers who try to explain the undying devotion of Dante and Petrarch by the death and distance of their loved ones rebuked by the devoted Voltaire! Voltaire is the perfect soul-mate. And not only his fidelity to his lady, but also his insight might

serve as a model to every lover, and every mistress. And is not Voltaire's manner of reconciling himself to the inevitable dignified and worthy of emulation? Those admirers of Frau von Stein who consider the resentment of the forsaken woman to be justified will perhaps be disconcerted by Voltaire's behaviour in a similar situation. Frau von Stein was at the fatal moment about the same age as Voltaire. Goethe and Emilie were seven and twelve years younger than their respective soul-mates, both of whom were not only no longer young but also ailing."

One of the company asked doubtfully: "Do you really mean to compare Goethe and Madame du Châtelet on the one hand with Voltaire and Frau von Stein on the other?"

Manfred answered laughingly: "Yes! The similarity of the situation in which Emilie and Goethe found themselves in relation to their respective soul-mates is really striking. Emilie du Châtelet was, as little as Goethe, after his Italian experiences, one of those who disregard the sacred voice of nature and fly in the face of providence for the sake of pauline, medieval notions of the end of the world. Both were instinctively conscious of those injunctions to philosophy and fertility expounded by Socrates and the Old Testament."

Georg Brandes: "Voltaire learnt to appreciate the views of his mistress in hardly as many hours as Frau von Stein took years to reconcile herself to the change in Goethe. When Voltaire observed that his beloved hostess had succumbed to the more youthful charms of Saint-Lambert, his resentment was at first as bitter as that of Frau von Stein, when she remarked that Goethe had been 'utterly depoetised by the Vulpus.' But Voltaire grumbled only for a few hours. Hours for his departure were not to be procured that same night, and, before the morning dawned, the fair Emilie found an opportunity for a serious conversation with him. He still grumbled: 'What? You demand that I should believe you after what I have seen? For your sake I staked my health and my fortune, I have made every sacrifice, and you deceive me.'

She: 'I love you as much as ever, but for a long time you have been complaining that you are sick, that your strength is



deserting you, that you have lost your powers of endurance. I am very sorry for that ; your health is precious to me ; there is no one living to whom it is so dear as to me. You for your part have displayed the most lively interest in my own health ; you have known and appreciated the attentions which my health requires ; you have even found them enchanting and helped to supply them so long as your state of health permitted it. Now, as you admit that you cannot do anything to further my well-being without very serious injury to your own, have you the right to be angry if one of your friends takes your place ? ’

He : ‘ You are perfectly right. But since the situation must be such as it has now become, do at least see that it is not enacted before my eyes.’ When Madame du Châtelet saw that he was pacified, she embraced him, and withdrew, begging him to get some rest. Any one who feels called upon to throw a stone at Voltaire or Emilie should not overlook how Voltaire six years before these events defended himself against the importunate banter of Frederick the Great. The King had written to him (1742) in a way which Frau von Stein would not have approved. He wrote ‘ Do you wish me to believe that you have for ten years been conversing with the most charming woman in France only of philosophy ? You have feelings, and she is not made of stone ! Voltaire replied with touching candour :

*Plût au ciel que je l'eusse encore  
Ce premier des divins présents,  
Ce don que toute femme adore*

And it was not only to Frederick II. that Voltaire addressed such verses ; Madame du Châtelet had before this received similar poems of renunciation from her lover.”

Manfred : “ It has struck me as an amusing and characteristic fact in the life of Frederick II. that this would-be great king tried to emulate Voltaire’s poems of renunciation. This occurred after the battle of Kunersdorf, when Frederick was seized with that passion for scribbling which, according to de Catt’s diaries, appears to have been the true cause of the defeat

at Maxen and which gave rise to the King's poem addressed to Voltaire and closing with the words :

*A cinquante ans on est trop sage.*

"Voltaire, to whom this admission was addressed, had long before noted down in his memoirs why he considered Frederick II. to be incapable of any rashness in this domain.—When Voltaire relinquished Madame du Châtelet to Saint-Lambert—not as Theseus relinquished Helen to Menelaus, but as Menelaus relinquished the fairest of women to Paris, he was of the same age as Frau von Stein, who was incapable of cheerful renunciation. Voltaire's devoted friendship to Emilie, however, continued unaltered until the death of the beloved. That Goethe should have pardoned Frau von Stein her lack of humour, and even, when she allowed it, resumed his friendly relations with her, is a proof of his extreme goodness of heart. But Voltaire seems to me even more magnanimous, for he conceded to his beloved one a right which in Europe and other countries where female subjection prevails is allowed only to men. Voltaire is the emancipator of the European woman."

The devout mood provoked by the pregnant verses of Voltaire and Frederick II. was interrupted by a clever young journalist, who had been a silent listener to parts of the earlier conversations ; I have forgotten his name. "It is a melancholy business," he exclaimed, "to compare Goethe's women with those of Voltaire. One is often tempted to ask the shade of Goethe : 'Who is your companion ?' To which he answers sadly : 'That you must never ask me'."

Manfred interposed : "And the great Frederick, with his 'women . . . ?'" But the former speaker continued : "I am afraid that Lili and Frau von Stein and Frederika and Christiane all put together would still have nothing to show in respect either of inner worth or outward appearance that could be compared with Madame de Rupelmonde or Adrienne Lecouvreur and certainly not with Emilie du Châtelet, who was beautiful, who loved devotedly, who had wit and who managed admirably her fortune and her estate ; while the greatest of the Germans had only poor Christiane and a few nonentities to

redeem the honour of German women. Certainly Lili could not prevent Goethe's flight to Weimar, and if Frederick the Great had summoned Goethe to Berlin instead of Luchsesini, no Frau von Stein and no Christiane would have been able to hold him back. There are hundreds of Charlottes capable of renouncing and still more Christianes capable of bestowing, but there is only one divine Emilie, only one Adrienne Lecouvreur."

There was some laughter, both from those who were amused at the speaker's audacity and those who agreed with his remarks.

Manfred intervened: "Perhaps Adrienne Lecouvreur was not so unapproachable as the fair Corona Schröter, who depicted herself so admirably as a self-sacrificing Iphigenia, is said to have been. Perhaps, too, Adrienne was superior to Goethe's 'several Lottes,' more beautiful, possessed of greater worldly experience, more cultured, more magnanimous and gifted with an almost unparalleled power to be at once 'star of the supremest height and closest, nearest bliss,' 'my sister or my wife.' And yet if Goethe, instead of his Lottes, had found Adrienne, we should have had neither Werther nor Tasso, neither Iphigenia nor the precious letters of 1776 to 1788. As it is beyond our mortal powers to divine the splendour of the works which we should then possess in place of those that we should lose, many will prefer the Lottes to Adrienne, and think that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

Some one interposed: "Did Voltaire write anything in honour of Adrienne?"

Georg Brandes: "She was the great interpreter of his tragedies. Are they not therefore written in her honour? Voltaire wrote very little to her personally, but that little was good." Brandes had a few verses by heart, and he recited them to us.

Manfred: "It was of Voltaire's short poems to individuals that Goethe said: 'There is not a line of them that is not pregnant with wit, clearness, gaiety and grace.'"

Georg Brandes: "The longest composition dedicated by Voltaire to Adrienne Lecouvreur was the elegy in sixteen verses on her death, perhaps the finest poem that he ever wrote. But even this lament expresses no less strongly than his grief at

her death his resentment at the shameful conduct of the clergy, who denied an honourable burial to the great actress, as they nearly did to Molière and actually did to Voltaire himself. So that this elegy has the ring of a battle-cry :

*O rivale d'Athènes, ô Londres ! heureuse terre !  
Ainsi que les tyrans vous avez su chasser  
Des préjugés honteux qui vous livraient la guerre*

a song of battle against superstition and on behalf of that freedom of the arts and sciences, which in England in the same year secured for the actress, Anne Oldfield, a burial in Westminster Abbey with almost royal honours."

An optimist interposed : "Germany too was not backward in this direction ; Goethe was buried in the princely vault."

A pessimist retorted : "Yes and no. Goethe's body was not, like the corpses of the princes, lowered into the vault through the rotunda ; that was held by the Court to be too great an honour. The heavy coffin was smuggled into the vault by way of a small staircase. It had to be carried upright. *Memento vivere ! Memento mori !* Goethe went upright into his grave."

Georg Brandes : "Such pettiness is all the more astonishing in view of the appreciation which Frederick the Great bestowed on Voltaire's elegy to Adrienne Lecouvreur, in spite of its political sentiments. The King even set the poem to music himself."

Manfred said mockingly : "While Frederick II. did not neglect any opportunity of writing music against tyrants and of extolling free England, the English traveller, Dr. John Moore, gives the following account of his impressions of Berlin : 'The common state of slavery in Asia . . . is freedom in comparison with this kind of military slavery.' " Then Manfred continued, but no longer jestingly : "In my edition of Voltaire, next to the lament on the death of Adrienne is the daring *Fête de Bellebat*. If one did not know that Voltaire's *Fête de Bellebat* was written long before Goethe's *Tasso*, one would like to think that Voltaire was poking fun at Goethe, just as Goethe once in his *Deified Faun* poked fun at Herder, or as

*Harlequin's Wedding* may be regarded as a skit on *The Sorrows of the young Werther*. Goethe and Voltaire were about the same age when they wrote *Tasso* and *La Fête de Bellebat*. But while the thirty-year old Goethe was contending at the most trivial court in Europe for a laurel crown, which was then jeered at by petty courtiers, with mocking allusions to Ariosto and Vergil, the thirty-year old Voltaire was triumphing among the highest nobility of France, and was crowned by the most powerful woman in that country. To celebrate the occasion the aristocrats had placed on their heads paper hats as tall as sugarloaves, on which were inscribed the names of the greatest poets of antiquity, and the chorus of homage was led by the then all-powerful Marquise de Prie, who crowned the admired Voltaire with the laurel wreath 'in the sight of all' and at the same time promised him in laughing verses—in the hearing of all—'*encore mieux*' when they were alone. The verses of thanks addressed by the poet to the guests at the fête, as well as the lively exchange of jesting allusions, are inexpressibly graceful and daring."

One of the ladies present asked if there were not something rather nauseatingly frivolous in the sugar-loaf hats of the nobles and the suggestive promise of the Marquise?

Georg Brandes answered: "If I understand you aright, dear lady, you are making the same objection as Rousseau once made to Voltaire, when he exclaimed: 'Pray, how much virile beauty have you sacrificed to our false delicacy? How many great works has the spirit of chivalry cost you?' But any one who is offended at Voltaire's gay audacity, should remember that the spartan Frederick the Great was filled with admiration for the tone of this Paris society, and he attributes the brilliance which distinguishes all Voltaire's work primarily to his intercourse with this 'high society.' Any one who ponders this will perhaps be inclined to admire the *Fête de Bellebat* as a precious specimen of rococo."

Manfred: "In order properly to appreciate this gem of Voltaire's one has to remember the repulsive coarseness which characterised Frederick II. and his court. It is hardly possible to question the trustworthiness of those records made by Count Lehndorff daily for decades. He not only describes the

notorious and outrageous brutality displayed by the King towards his guests, but relates how the other members of the royal family diverted themselves with boorish pleasantries, which are worthy of Grimmelshausen's tales of the Thirty Years' War. If you want a Prussian counterpart to Voltaire's *Fête de Bellebat*, I recommend to you the following description of the reception in the Queen's palace on June 11th, 1756, of Frederick's sister, Amalie, by her brother, Augustus William.

" 'The Prince of Prussia received us amiably and led us into a room, where a remarkable spectacle was presented to our eyes. In it were twenty serving-girls with curled hair, and handsomely dressed, who were to take part in a fête in honour of the Abbess of Quedlinburg (Princess Amalie). . . . The Princess entered in the company of the Prince amid beating of drums and sounding of trumpets. As she entered the room, she was met by this throng of ladies ; they made the most absurd curtsies and capers, each one holding in her hand a large visiting card. On these were written Vicomtesse de Cultendre, Marquise de Pissenlit, in short, the most comical names. Then the Abbess was led to her apartments where she found a huge *pot de chambre*, with the inscription : For the use of Your Reverence.'

"The pious abbess from Berlin ! At the same time the diarist insists on the admirable qualities of his princes. After describing a repast at which the Hohenzollern Abbess, Amalie, was served with twenty dishes described by such witty inscriptions as ' buttock of Lot's wife,' Lehnendorff writes of the host : ' I venture to assert that there is no more lovable man on this earth than the Prince of Prussia,' that is to say, Frederick II.'s eldest brother. Frederick's sister, Amalie, has more insight, at any rate during her occasional outbursts of shameless candour. At the end of her spicy description of the Prussian Court, addressed on May 23rd, 1769, to the great Landgravine of Hesse, she wrote : ' To tell the truth, the whole *boutique*, beginning with myself, are a set of good-for-nothings.' (85) Even Count Lehnendorff, who so idolised his royal masters, makes an occasional admission such as the following (24, iii. 1756) : ' The love of buffoonery and the undisguised contempt of our princes for

their own nation is alienating hearts once devotedly attached to them.' And when Lehndorff paid a secret visit to Dresden—a permit for the journey having been refused him—he was surprised to see that there 'the princes and princesses were treated like private persons,' and he wrote: 'In Dresden there is a prevailing mood of cheerfulness which is not to be found with us.' In view of the boorish tone of the Berlin court, it is perhaps not only a result of that snobbish 'contempt for their own nation' to which Lehndorff alludes that cultured foreigners as, for instance, the French and English ambassadors, Nivernais and Hotham, had a civilising influence in Berlin, and frequently provoked Count Lehndorff to remarks such as the following: 'I consider that the example of Monsieur de Nivernais has had an excellent influence on the royal household and on the city. He is scrupulously polite, and people try to copy him.' This same snobbish provincialism explains the fact that Frederick II., who introduced his wife to a guest as 'my old cow,' (86) speaks of Voltaire's '*excellent ton*,' as he did, for instance, as late as 1783. It is almost an insult to Voltaire or Goethe to assume that the King thereby meant the same thing as Goethe, who twenty years later enumerates among Voltaire's forty-six virtues 'tone, good tone, court tone.'—A little later Manfred said: "It seems to me that the fête of Bellebat was an experience that Goethe might well have envied Voltaire. When I read this farcical poem, I cannot help thinking of the scene in the *Italian Journey*, where Goethe praises the 'lively public.' 'The audience shouted bravo, clapped and laughed. If one could only perform before one's own nation in person. We put our best into print, and every one broods over it in his own corner and makes what he can of it.' How well that applies to *Tasso*, at which Goethe had been working since 1780, and which was published in 1790 and not performed until 1807!"

Georg Brandes: "Goethe might well have envied Voltaire his experience at the first performance of *Œdipe*. Voltaire was then fêted even more than at Bellebat, and in a manner which recalls scenes from *Tasso*. Voltaire's *Œdipe* won an undeserved notoriety as a satire on the liaison of the then regent with his own daughter."

Manfred : “ ‘ Loterie,’ as they called it mockingly.”

Georg Brandes : “ The Regent, the gifted son of the famous Liselotte of the Pfalz, overlooked the alleged satire, and clapped the piece, which was also enthusiastically applauded not only by the opposition nobility but by all Paris. Finally Voltaire appeared in the box of the Marshal de Villars between the latter and his beautiful wife, whom the poet loved so passionately and so unhappily. The audience shouted to her in a chorus : ‘ Give him a kiss ! ’ She did so amid general applause, but there it remained ; she did not, like the Marquise de Prie, promise any *encore mieux*, nor did she grant it.”

Manfred said laughingly : “ So there we have Voltaire’s Princess d’Este and Frau von Stein ? ”

The young journalist who had spoken before intervened almost passionately.

“ What could be plainer ? Goethe was cut off from the great world. Weimar was a village. He saw the world ‘ at most on a holiday, through a telescope from afar,’ in Italy, or now and then in the neighbourhood of Napoleon and of the Empress Ludovica. Instead he had Charles Augustus and Knebel, he moped with the Herders and Frau von Stein, and made up for it later, as best he could, in the distinguished society of the Bohemian spas. From his youth up he lacked Paris and London, the Duc de Richelieu, Lord Bolingbroke, and Frederick the Great, the Marquise de Prie, the Maréchale de Villars, the Comtesse de Rupelmonde, Adrienne Lecouvreur and Madame du Châtelet and the rest of Voltaire’s intimate friends. In the diary of the Duc de Coligny, said to have been the first lover of Ninon de Lenclos, we find the words : ‘ Made a man by one whom I made a woman.’ It seems to me that in ‘ Germany, cold Germany ’—to quote an air from *Don Juan*—the fair ladies too long neglected this duty towards their greatest singer, and put him off with empty promises until he was well advanced in years ! ”

Here we were summoned to supper, at which many of the afternoon’s guests were present, but the conversation turned on other things.

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When after supper I went into the library, I found there some guests who were not yet tired of the conversation of that afternoon. The gist of the conversation at which I was present is still clear in my memory, though I may have some difficulty in assigning the contributions correctly to the various speakers. At first only Georg Brandes and Manfred took part. As I entered I heard Manfred say: "After all that you have told us about Voltaire, it seems to me indisputable that Voltaire would have been a lover after Frau von Stein's own heart. Not only was his love constant, but it became refined more and more to a kind of purity or 'purified morality'—as Frau Klara Hofer, the singer of Frau von Stein's praises and critic of 'Goethe's marriage' describes it—after Frau von Stein's own heart."

Georg Brandes: "The manner in which Voltaire quite early speaks of his supreme love and refers to his lady as Urania is interesting. It would certainly be doing Rousseau too much honour to seek in the *Nouvelle Héloïse* the sole origin of the new fashion of treating love no longer flippantly but in a religious if not a Christian spirit. In Voltaire too we find examples of ecstatic devotion to nature."

Manfred: "They are also to be found in Liselotte of the Pfalz, who wrote from Versailles: 'to my thinking, nature is above art.' Frederick II., who wanted to be and appear French at any price, could dream of nothing more beautiful than the Court of Louis XIV.; but the honest German Liselotte of the Pfalz, amid the exquisite parks of Lenôtre, yearned for the freedom of the German forests or for a meadow with a stream. She and Lafontaine must be reckoned among the first romantics and predecessors of Rousseau, Werther and Goethe's equally sick because romantic Iphigenia. Liselotte and Lafontaine did not feel at ease in the crystal palaces of Versailles. Their discomfort was perhaps akin to that which Rousseau suffered in a more extreme form, and to the distress which Goethe's Werther experienced in the company of the great."

Georg Brandes: "With Rousseau it was quite a different matter. He was sickly and did not know how to behave in good society, and his discomfort drove him to cry out upon

art and civilisation as vices of the upper classes, and to seek purity and virtue in the lower classes, among whom he felt at home. Hitherto the upper classes had jested at vice. Frederick the Great boasted of his vices in his youth. After Rousseau the constant subject of conversation was virtue; it was the rage, especially among the women." Later Georg Brandes related to us a great many little-known facts concerning one of Voltaire's closest friends, the Duc de Richelieu. It was very amusing, and well suited to a masculine conversation continued to a late hour, but I will not venture to reproduce here more than is necessary as a link with the following discussion.

Georg Brandes began: "On the death of the Marshal de Richelieu, there were found on his table unopened no less than five notes from distinguished ladies imploring on one and the same day for 'one hour of his night.' He was then ninety-two years of age. The women adored him and accounted it an honour merely to have their names coupled with his. He was, as it were, irradiated by the brilliance of all the fair and famous women who had loved and embraced him. And with his quick susceptibility he had learnt from all of them. They had all tried to help him; they had, for his sake, felt, divined, observed, conjectured, and they had taught him too to divine, to observe and to feel."

Manfred: "What you have related would apply equally well to Goethe, Voltaire and many great artists, who—in spite of Goethe's assurance that 'women take more than they give' and that 'women are the silver vessels in which we lay our golden apples'—were none the less often great and godsent recipients, and therewith fulfilled a sacred mission and saved for their nation the precious thing that might otherwise have been lost without leaving a trace. But you must admit that these gatherers in the vineyards of 'Our Lady' were almost always less well equipped by the good God than the great Don Richelieu."

Georg Brandes: "Yes, he combined the arrogant self-confidence of the lucky player with the glamour that invests a world-famous name; an old-French, reckless audacity and

great military renown, with exquisite irony of tone and style, great wealth, and unfailing youthful vigour."

Manfred : " You make one inclined to believe in the advent of the superman ! And if Richelieu really did deliver the male sex, as did Ninon de Lenclos the female sex, from the tyrannous superstition that old age must come, I will try to forget the unpleasing picture painted by Macaulay of the scandalous old age and the prematurely red nose of the famous Duke. But you must admit that, as regards the great intellectual heroes, and not only Voltaire, ' the bodily faculties minister less brilliantly to their vicious inclinations '—to quote rather freely a phrase used of Frederick II.—than was the case with Richelieu. If Goethe at seventy-two had been a little more like Richelieu, he would perhaps have received a kinder answer from Ulrike, and God might perhaps have made him, like the ninety-year old Abraham, the ancestor of a chosen people. A man who should combine all the intellectual and physical gifts with all the advantages conferred by birth and estate, would in very truth be an Olympian and the saviour of the world ; for, as Goethe said to Riemer : ' At the time when there were still kings, there were still gods.' It would seem as though all the powers of darkness had conspired to deprive the world of this supreme spectacle. It is as though the great men who have hitherto rejoiced the world were not the ripe consummation of human hopes, but chance fugitives from the mortal conflict which a host of devils are waging against the human race."

We did not quite understand what Manfred meant. He continued : " When Wilhelm von Humboldt visited Paris once more in 1797, he was told by old Bernardin de Saint-Pierre—not the champion of perpetual peace, but the disciple of Rousseau and the author of *Paul et Virginie*—that ' the personal beauty of the men of the age of Louis XIV. was largely the result of the beauty of the King, on whom the eyes of all the women were fixed, and of whom there were pictures everywhere. In the same way, and in all innocence, the children are prettier in a village which has a handsome priest.' (87) There you have that romantic element in pure breeding which is indis-

pensable when impotents like Frederick II. and Rousseau are the heroes of the day. Louis XIV. and his successors were much more practical than Saint-Pierre would appear to suspect. But Saint-Pierre's contemporaries and successors were enmeshed more and more in the toils of the unpractical romantic obstacles, of which Saint-Pierre dreams.

Take, for instance, Goethe: from what physical, spiritual, social and economic impediments he had to suffer! What could be more repugnant to his noble nature than that fatal embarrassment in the presence of strangers, which afflicted him up to an advanced age, and helped to bring about his exile to that little Weimar where he, who had only felt himself happy in Rome and whom Napoleon had invited to Paris, he whose heart craved for commerce with the great, had to act as factotum—thus did Wieland and Herder describe him—and as *maître de plaisir* of a petty princeling, to supervise roadbuilding, raise recruits, see to the ducal floors, tapestries and night-stools, and receive moral instruction from an unfortunate court lady. By his high intellectual gifts and heroic efforts he surmounted the infinite absurdity of it all, just as a talented tradesman overcomes the disgrace of poverty and lays the foundations of a house which his capable sons raise to a position of worldwide importance. But who were Goethe's heirs? Take his spiritual heirs. Who among them could be deemed more worthy than Grillparzer, a poet with a passion for culture in the highest sense of the term, but who even in the capital was stifled by philistinism, reaction and the disintegration of the Empire? Think of Goethe's own children; six were born to him, but only one son survived. Possibly the mother was not good for much, but there is no reason to doubt the procreative powers of her gifted husband. Obstetrics and hygiene were in a sad state at that time, and Goethe himself barely survived the dangers of childbirth. His eldest son, the only one who survived, was a nonentity, though this again proves nothing. Frederick II. and Napoleon had elder brothers who are no longer remembered. Nature is very wasteful. Augustus the Strong, says Frederick II.'s sister, had 350 children, only one of whom became a great general, only one of his grand-daughters a

Georges Sand. Goethe calls women the silver vessels, in which 'we' lay our golden apples like the caliphs of the 'West-Eastern Divan.' The great North-Indian Emperors used to fill four hundred silver vessels with golden apples, and each stood in a magnificent garden which the Emperor had had specially made. The splendour of these Indian women's gardens with their terraces and fountains is fabulous. But no one constructed more fabulous gardens for his women than Goethe. Only fools would dare to measure Goethe, whom they name an Olympian, by a narrow philistine rule, and express amazement that he could not produce the phoenix from the Bajadere nor a Christ from Christiane. Perhaps it was mainly impediments of a social and economic nature and not spiritual or physical impediments that prevented Goethe from having as many children as Augustus of Saxony? And there would probably have been some prodigious fellows among them! The world is poorer for lack of them.—I have a good friend in California named Goethe. He is a real estate broker, and makes a great deal of money. He does not know a word of German, and pronounces his name something like 'Geffe'; but he does a great deal for the poor. He has had kindergartens and playing-grounds on American lines constructed in the over-populated towns of India and China."

Hegemann: "What do you mean by that?"

Manfred: "That it would not be a bad thing if there were a few hundred Goethes, even if they were not all great poets. Where there were nobility deserving of the name, the institution of the *jus primae noctis* must have been of vast importance to the development of the people. In Germany this important right hardly existed among the nobility. Goethe says: 'Compared with the French aristocracy, the German, such as Götz, Frunsparg, etc., always seem to me bourgeois and philistine.' The French Revolution begins with *Le Mariage de Figaro*; it marks the point at which the women of the *tiers état* can no longer find any superior excellencies in their noble lords. When once the demand of the Revolution for 'equality' had been satisfied, it was no longer worth while for a woman to be unfaithful to her husband; thus there came about 'that so-

called greater fidelity of women,’ of which Goethe once spoke to Riemer. A terrible thing when this fidelity becomes so firmly rooted in them that the poor creatures cannot distinguish a nobleman, if such should once more make his appearance, from a philistine. Then Goethe’s complaint will be justified : ‘ Women have no irony ; they cannot leave go. Hence their so-called greater fidelity, because they cannot control themselves, and they cannot do so, because they are more exacting and more dependent than men.’ Charlotte von Stein, Christiane, Lili and Ulrike are typically dependent women, exacting attentions. The Comtesse de Rupelmonde, Adrienne Lecouvreur and Emilie du Châtelet are independent and generous.”

Thomas Mann and Lytton Strachey came in from the terrace and joined us. Manfred explained to them : “ We are speaking of Voltaire, Goethe, Frederick the Great and women and ”—he made a wide gesture—“ of kindred questions.” The conversation which followed ranged lightly over vast fields and included comparisons of the most various celebrities.

Georg Brandes finally made an attempt to sum up and return to one of the starting points : “ One cannot demand from Goethe too much energy, fertility and uxoriousness, even though he did not, like Voltaire, remain true to one mistress for the last fifty years of his life. Even a German writer is after all a fighter, or, as Goethe says, a martyr. It does not do for a soldier to be married. Voltaire was always preeminently a soldier and missionary. Truth alone was the ultimate goal of his desire, humanity alone the object of his praise and admiration. Justice was his only bride and fame the only mistress with whom he travelled and lived.”

Lytton Strachey : “ And more than that ! When Madame du Châtelet died, Voltaire was already the most famous man in Europe, but it is a remarkable fact that his fame was then based almost exclusively on productions of no lasting worth, and that, if he had died at that date, we should only remember him as an overrated poet and a cunning and ingenious man. The first sixty years of his life served him only as an apprenticeship for the twenty-four years of his mighty old age, in which he established himself as the intellectual master of Europe, to a degree

only attained, since the collapse of the Roman Empire, by Bernard de Clairvaux and Erasmus of Rotterdam."

Manfred: "Women may have been remote from his old age, but a radiance from younger days illumines the night."

Thomas Mann: "In respect to Voltaire, you may try to save woman's honour, but in respect to Frederick the Great, who was the original subject of our afternoon's conversation, you will find it impossible. Evidently Frederick's masculinity was not attracted by the opposite female pole in the ordinary manner. His notion of soldiering was ascetic and anti-feminine to such a degree as to exclude the soft delights of love and marriage. He did not like his officers to marry; they were to be fighting monks like their king. In the year 1778, among the seventy-four officers of a regiment of dragoons not one was married."

Manfred, who, like myself, was reminded of our previous discussion of an allied subject, said jestingly: "The woman-hater, Frederick, wanted his officers to be unmarried; the unmarried Nietzsche demanded that philosophers should be unmarried. M. Brandes recommends that soldiers and missionaries should be unmarried. Mr. Strachey extols the exploits of the bachelor, Voltaire. And yet the great soldier, Achilles, always had a girl in his tent, and Paul, the great missionary to the heathen nations, was not led astray by his own preaching against marriage, but claimed for himself, 'as well as other apostles,' 'power to lead about a sister, a wife' (88); and Plato in fact preached not platonic love but the physical fertility of philosophers and kings.

"For me Voltaire was until his death the prophet of the 'secrets' of Madame de Rupelmonde, of Adrienne Lecouvreur, and of Madame du Châtelet. The women who loved him were worthy to be named Pandora, and he might say with Epimetheus:

'What more have I to lose, Pandora flown.'

"Like the aged Sophocles, like Goethe's 'man of fifty,' Voltaire as an old man enjoyed 'a convenient and commendable freedom.' This freedom was not vouchsafed to Goethe. The death of Werther did not deliver him from the torments of

love; nor was he an Epimetheus, for he never had a Pandora. And his Helen, like Faust's, was a phantom. Even as an old man he suffered bitterly from unhappy love. The young Angiolina belonged to Byron's aged doge, Marino Faliero, by her free choice. To serve such a truly royal man, be it as Abisag served King David or as Mary served the Holy Ghost, is for the elect a royal vocation. If, all through Goethe's life, the German women only valued him as a more or less 'good match' . . ."

Hegemann: "What then?"

Manfred: "I do not want to seem impolite."

Thomas Mann: "And Frederick the Great?"

Manfred: "He was perhaps, like the German women, victim of a . . ."

Manfred hesitated, and Thomas Mann finished the sentence for him: ". . . of a royal vocation!"

It was now late, and we wished each other good night. When I was alone in my room and as I was making some notes of the day's conversation, I was filled with something like pain. As I thought of the women who had been mentioned in the course of the conversations, I seemed to see on the one hand utter poverty and on the other overflowing wealth. I recalled a remark made by Manfred: "The results of this dire poverty, which were fatal to one who, like Frederick II., was not rooted in any national life, might also have been fatal to Goethe, had he not—being stronger than Frederick—been able by his heroic and untiring patience, his spiritual ardour and his vast power of imagination, to refashion the triviality of his environment and raise it to a height at which intellectual life becomes possible. The high country which Goethe created, that is to say imagined, lay far above the German lowland, and above all, far from the flogged Prussia of Frederick II."

The conversation had a little epilogue, when, next morning, Manfred found me in the garden and asked me: "What are you reflecting about so deeply?" I replied: "Perhaps about Frederick the Great as a lover."

Manfred: "You are sorry for the 'dear little hero'? He was not so lonely after all. He had his Fredersdorf."

I begged him not to venture upon further insinuations.



Manfred laughed: "Good heavens, no! Not every one has the friends he deserves, but a Frederick has a large choice, and is free to choose whatever ties of affinity he pleases. The patient, oily Fredersdorf was an admirable supplement to the excitable king, with his frantic craving for applause. Every Prussian salad had to be swallowed with this palatable mixture of oil and vinegar.

" ' Frederick's addiction to offensive banter ' . . . drove away ' one friend after the other. . . . How the King must have grieved over this ! ' wail Frederick's panegyrists. (89) But Fredersdorf remained true to him till death, and the King remained true to Fredersdorf.

" And it was not merely self-interest that induced this humble lackey to endure his lot until he became ' privy chamberlain ' and the owner of large estates, and, in fact, the Home Minister of Prussia, as Eichel was perhaps the true Foreign Minister. Yes, Fredersdorf even obtained permission to marry. Frederick's admirers complain that ' the King and Fredersdorf had nothing in common, either in the intellectual domain or in the domain of art properly speaking, despite the chamberlain's activity in connection with the royal theatre and works of art. ' They talk glibly of an ' unbridgeable gulf in the intellectual domain. ' Had there been such a gulf—instead of the most deep and inward harmony between their souls—' in the intellectual domain, ' it would have been completely bridged over by their blood-relationship. Both had hæmorrhoids, regarding the development and treatment of which they regaled each other with endless fascinating descriptions. It often happens that lackeys become enthusiastically interested in the internal organs of their masters, but it is more than touching to find letter after letter, in which the great King expresses his concern for the intestines of his valet. Again and again the King writes: ' Only have patience! Your present attacks are the result of the hæmorrhoids. . . . God keep you, be patient for a few days, seat yourself on a chair, and let the vapour from the warm milk rise to the hæmorrhoids. That is generally very helpful. And you must take plenty of refrigerants! God keep you! Fck. '

"That was in September, 1753. On June 5, 1755, he wrote to his bosom-friend, Fredersdorf: 'I assure you I could not be more anxious about myself if I were ill than I am about you! . . . After a careful examination of your condition, it seems that you have ulcers in the prostate . . . in addition to this there are the hæmorrhoidal spasms . . . these movements—on account of the proximity of the rectum to the prostate—produce every month about the 14th either retention of urine or fever. . . .'

"It is very touching; the King, who on almost every day of the forty-six years of his reign had the soldiers of his great army flogged until the bleeding strips of flesh hung from their naked bodics—not to speak of the hundreds of thousands who were ignominiously buried beneath the barren soil of his battle-fields—made atonement by his devoted care for the intestines of a chosen member of this martyred army (Fredersdorf was originally a common soldier). It is absurd to deny the deep spiritual affinity. Again and again the King assures his favourite: 'One has to treat you like a child.' . . . 'If you go out too early, you are upset for two months!' . . . 'I have taken so much trouble to make a thorough study of your disease' . . . 'If you could be kept in cotton-wool, it would still be not enough.' But the King is not intent merely on studying and tending his favourite's disease; he also likes to give him detailed descriptions of his own troubles. For instance, on March 9th, 1747: 'As you wish to know all my symptoms, I must tell you that there is a great deal of hypochondria in my disease. The left side below the ribs towards the back gives me the most trouble. The kidneys are largely to blame; and occasionally there is a swelling of the spleen. Then the left arm hurts me as though I had a flux there; and sometimes I feel as though I should suffocate, and the same at night. The urine only helps me when it is thick, with sediment in it; but air and exercise do me good. When I have that raging pain in the side I have to vomit everything. . . .' And so on.

"Since Fredersdorf, to whom all this and much else of the same sort was related, was not a physician, it seems unquestionable that relations of true friendship existed between him and

the suffering king, unless one is to assume that both gentlemen were like old women who like to pass the time by dilating upon their ailments. But it was not only the desire to describe to each other their bodily ailments that united these kindred spirits. They shared still deeper secrets: Fredersdorf and his enlightened sovereign together exerted themselves on behalf of the art of gold-making. And in this domain Fredersdorf was the intellectual leader of the King, whose power to appreciate alchemy had been a little spoilt by his association with all kinds of free-thinkers, and it was only gradually and under the influence of his gifted valet that he recovered faith in the miraculous working of the philosophers' stone and of the 'bloody lamb.' Fredersdorf erected large laboratories for the male and female charlatans who thronged to Berlin and Potsdam, and the King's expectations were roused to the highest pitch. With his wide statesmanlike vision he planned how the military policy of Prussia might be influenced by his new source of gold. In September, 1753, he wrote, therefore, to his faithful Fredersdorf: 'What you have told me of Frau Nothnagel fills me with real hope, and, if the last specimen is gold, I think one can act upon this. I fancy that the question will be settled this week. If you hear anything, write to me, for on the frontiers (that is to say, in foreign politics) there are further complications. God keep you!' and another time: 'If the woman should really make gold, do not send anything more to the mint. And by the way, I will have the gold sent to me, so that no one can see our cards.' Here again we have the great, silent sceptic and practical man, with his knowledge of human nature, the same far-sighted and erudite father of his country, who disdained to pay any attention to the epoch-making discovery that the beet-root contains sugar."

Hegemann: "Are you not again unjust in demanding of the old king that he should enter into the ideas of a younger generation?"

Manfred: "The chemist, Andreas Marggraf, made his discovery in the year 1745, eight years before the great king almost or really discovered how to make gold."

Hegemann: . . .

Manfred : " Do you know where Marggraf's great discovery was made ? "

Hegemann : " No. "

Manfred : " Not in Dresden, Vienna or Paris, but in Berlin, in the Court Pharmacy of the great King. It is perhaps for that reason that Marggraf's important discovery had no practical consequences. His important studies of alum also did not receive adequate recognition ; the gold King lived even longer than Marggraf. "

" And, after all, why in heaven's name should the great King trouble himself about the old-fashioned science of chemistry (the chemist Marggraf was older than himself), which could at the most found the sugar-export trade and rescue his trading companies from bankruptcy, when the new royal alchemy promised to produce gold by the hundredweight and supply a stream of cash to fill the Prussian war-chest ? In the days of his gold-mania, in September 1753, the King wrote to Fredersdorf : ' Please let me know whether the piece that you showed me a short time ago was really gold and whether the woman is quite sure of being able to make a hundredweight on Monday. ' Then the King, who was used to getting things done promptly, became impatient, or began to suspect that his friend Fredersdorf might rob his sovereign of a discovery so important for the welfare of Prussia. Frederick the Great therefore wrote a second letter, in which he says : ' Write to me on Monday whether the hundredweight comes off. If it does, everything shall be so arranged for production on a large scale that I shall be able to make a beginning next spring. '

" This first hundredweight, therefore, was only a preliminary start, and as the great Frederick seldom made mistakes, there could scarcely be a doubt as to the sequel. Hence it is safe to assume that Frederick's subsequent expressions of scepticism regarding the art of gold-making are merely proofs of the extreme craftiness of the great *trompeur et demi*, by means of which he adroitly attained the goal that he had set before himself : ' In this way, no one can see our cards ! '

" Subsequently Frederick the Great wrote : ' I prefer our simplicity and our poverty to riches. ' We may therefore

assume that he intentionally took his secret of gold-making with him into the grave and that he made no use of it, unless perchance it provided the twenty-two million taler (90) which he expended for his 'New Palace' immediately after the Seven Years' War, and the high pensions which he paid to his gold-makers. To his alchemist, Drop, alone he paid eight thousand taler, that is to say, four times as much as he was prepared to concede to the already famous Winckelmann; more even than to Voltaire, who at that time 'in a letter overflowing with malice' asked the secretary of Frederick II.'s Academy to strike his name out of the list of members. (91)

"Whether Frau Nothnagel, who received a 'patent' from Frederick the Great and the command to come to his alchemistic discussions 'in men's clothes,' did not receive considerably more than Voltaire, who did not know how to make gold, and even more than Drop, is difficult to determine, as the artful King occasionally gave instructions to burn accounts. (92)

"It is significant that Frederick's 'own rascallions' here again 'discuss the great man' and try to make out that the King never finally discovered the secret of gold-making. As, however, every one of the King's actions, even his ill-fated efforts to make gold, had to furnish evidence of his supreme greatness and material for the 'annual panegyric,' Frederick's 'rascallions' have here again hit upon a cunning interpretation. Many declare that Frederick's attempt to make gold with the aid of his congenial valet and Frau Nothnagel and the 'bloody lamb'—instead of concerning himself with the labours of brilliant chemists like Marggraf, which were then winning the serious attention of scientists—proves his remarkable anticipation of the twentieth century theory of electrons and atomic division, which did advance the possibility of producing gold into the domain of the conceivable. Frederick's decision to make gold with Frau Nothnagel's help and so replenish the Prussian exchequer is consequently not at all ridiculous. On the contrary, the admirers of the great King declare: 'We see in this decision, to which the King brought himself, despite his natural inclination to scepticism and mistrust and his dread of making himself ridiculous before the whole world, a great moral

act !' Here then, if ever, he was 'the first servant of his State !' (93)

"You understand, Voltaire allowed himself to be worked up to a religious enthusiasm by the red-haired Venus, Rupelmonde. Goethe allowed himself to be uplifted by Frau von Stein to a 'purified morality,' and the great King succeeded, with the aid of Frau Nothnagel, in performing 'a great moral act' !"

Manfred seemed to meditate for a little, and, when he began again, his voice sounded somewhat deeper : "Nothnagel ? 'You are derived from 'Göttern,' from 'Gothen' or from 'Kothe,' wrote Herder to Goethe, from whom we know that 'A man's own name is not like a cloak that hangs about him, but a perfectly fitting garment.' Is it not moving, and must it not inspire a German with an almost religious devotion ? His great King, whom 'rapscallions' accuse of frenchification, sham culture and narrow aristocratic prejudices, takes to himself in the great hour of need and of the 'moral act' not a Marquise de Cultendre, but a woman of the people, of his German people. He 'has recourse to Madame Nothnagel,' as Frederick himself wrote on the fifth birthday of Goethe. It is the true and most moral Frederick who bids Frau Nothnagel come to him in man's clothes, in order, remote from the rationalism of the now banished Voltaire, to descend in her company into the depths of gothic-medieval, German romanticism, to brew concoctions in mysterious retorts and cauldrons, and 'to put in the vessel the menstrum of the green lion which has rent the dragon in the fire,' according to the alchemistic hieroglyphics of a still extant gold recipe of Frederick's trusty Fredersdorf. 'Not' (need) breaks iron and 'Not' teaches to pray. The very name of Frau Nothnagel excites thoughts of Holy Grail mysticism. And since the green lion and the bloody lamb referred to by Frederick the Great and his recipes are one and the same as the 'great elixir' and the 'philosophers' stone,' which ensure not only supreme virtue but also eternal bliss, it is hardly reasonable to doubt that Frau Nothnagel, this Prussian sibyl, this holy enchantress and midwife of Prussian 'morality,' also delivered the great soul of the royal mocker at religion into the pious heaven of the second part of *Faust*. The

way in which the purified sage then renounces the treasures of his gold-making art : ' I prefer our simplicity and poverty to wealth,' is indeed a ' moral act ' of true Frederician greatness ! ”

Manfred's voice had become more and more deep and solemn during his last remarks, and even now I am not quite sure whether he was filled with a sudden understanding of a deep and alien national life or whether, out of friendly consideration for myself, he was stifling an unseemly inclination to give vent to derisive laughter.

## THE FOURTH CONVERSATION

### FREDERICK II. AS ROMANTIC, FATHER OF GERMAN LITERATURE, GENERAL AND STATESMAN, AND HIS SACRIFICE OF GERMANY'S POSITION AS A GREAT POWER

*Pour moi, menacé du naufrage,  
Je dois, en affrontant l'orage,  
Penser, vivre et mourir en roi.*

FREDERICK, 9th October, 1757.

Prussia dare not allow Alsace or Lorraine to be taken away from the French. . . . French policy has always been to fight against any increase of the power or predominance of the German Emperor.

Prussia is pursuing the same ends.

FREDERICK II. *Testament* of 1752.

We shall never be able to get back Lorraine from the French, unless we have first crushed Prussia.

(From the Report of the German Chancellor, Kaunitz, to the German Empress. August 28th, 1755.)

*Adieu. Je vais écrire au Roi de France, composer un solo, faire des vers à Voltaire, changer les réglemens de l'armée, et faire encore cent autres choses de cette espèce.*

(End of a typical letter from Frederick the Great to Jordan.)

I am a "dilettante" in every respect.

FREDERICK to VOLTAIRE, May 1st, 1760.





## FREDERICK II. AS A ROMANTIC

WHEN I entered the library the next morning, I found there Thomas Mann and Manfred in conversation concerning Frederick the Great. I heard Thomas Mann say something to the following effect: "Frederick was a martyr. He had to do wrong and to lead an irrational life, he dared not be a philosopher but was forced to be a king, in order that the earthly mission of a great nation might be fulfilled."

Manfred called out to me: "You have missed a great deal. Thomas Mann has just given the most interesting account of Frederick II. that I have ever heard. He portrays him as a royal martyr of such preeminence as almost to eclipse King Oedipus and King Codrus."

Turning to Thomas Mann, Manfred continued: "My interest in the question of Frederick II. is boundless. This king is my fellow-sufferer in the service of Apollo. Like myself, he could not resist the temptation to write an *Iphigenia*; his is the libretto for an opera written in 1748. If, however, the gods ever try to punish him and myself for this presumption, I shall plead in my favour that I am an unpretending private individual, and that at least I did not interfere with the work of Iphigenia's true and divinely inspired poet, as did Frederick II., when in 1779 he forced Goethe to interrupt his work on *Iphigenia*, in order to raise recruits for his 'potato war.' Frederick it was who compelled Goethe to leave 'his half-hatched egg to rot.' Only after he had classified the recruits for Frederick 'in accordance with the physiognomics of the Rhenish inch-rule,' could he 'mount to his ancient citadel of poetry and tend his child'." (94)

I asked, turning to Thomas Mann: "What do you mean by the contrast between king and philosopher? Is not the very

essence of Frederick II. that he was the crowned philosopher, quite in the sense of Plato, who thinks that the only salvation for the world is that it should be ruled by the philosophers ? ”

Thomas Mann : “ Frederick’s essence is perhaps so baffling on account of that dualism, which Rousseau reduced to the formula : ‘ *Il pense en philosophe et se conduit en roi.* ’ This is a great antithesis, comprising many striking contrasts : for instance, right and might, thought and deed, freedom and fate, reason and demonics, bourgeois morality and heroic duty.”

Manfred : “ Rousseau was perhaps less profound, certainly less impartial than yourself. I fear that by his famous verse on Frederick II. he meant to imply : Frederick talks like a good philosopher, but he behaves like a rascal. Rousseau, when he was suffering persecution, wrote a curious letter imploring the protection of Frederick II. ; it began with the sentence : ‘ Sire, I have said much ill of you, and I shall perhaps say still more.’ But however ridiculous Rousseau may appear when he then rejects the royal favours and so compels his Thérèse to accept them behind his back, he none the less displayed great insight into the political motives of Frederick II. Rousseau’s verse :

*Il pense en philosophe et se conduit en roi,  
La gloire, l’intérêt, voilà son dieu, sa loi*

could not have been more apt, if the poet had seen that first version disclosed by Voltaire of the sentence in *l’Histoire de mon temps*, in which Frederick says in justification of his attack on Maria Theresa : ‘ *L’ambition, l’intérêt, le désir de faire parler de soi, l’emportèrent ; et la guerre fut résolue.* ’

Hegemann : “ But is Voltaire to be relied on ? ”

Manfred : “ Perhaps not. In the first published version of *l’Histoire*, the passage runs : ‘ *ajoutez à ces raisons une armée toute prête à agir, des fonds tout trouvés et peut-être l’envie de se faire un nom ; tout cela fut cause de la guerre. . .* ’ Admissions, which did not please Bismarck, who said : ‘ Frederick II. himself described his attack on Silesia immediately after his accession as due to his thirst for glory.’ Whatever opinion you may have of Voltaire’s trustworthiness, it seems to me that his report is at least as trustworthy as that of Bismarck.”

Hegemann : " One must, however, admire the kindness with which Frederick treated the persecuted Rousseau."

Manfred : " The more so since Frederick, again faithfully following Voltaire's example, abhorred the unfortunate Rousseau, and described him as a disgrace to literature."

Hegemann : " How can you, Herr Thomas Mann, in the face of such evidence of Frederick's kindness of heart say : ' Frederick had to commit injustice and to lead an irrational life ' ? "

Manfred : " The more so since Frederick II. still respected the Frenchman in Rousseau, even after he had become a Prussian subject."

Thomas Mann paid no heed to this mocking remark ; he saw my good intention and answered me patiently : " Frederick, who fought and suffered in a superhuman degree, saw in the humanity about him merely a proletariat rabble. It is impossible to understand why, despising it as he did, he yet laboured for this rabble so prodigiously, devoted himself untiringly to repairing the disasters he had caused, helped to restore the agriculture and finances of his country, called into existence whole industries, conquered an additional province, and by skilful colonisation raised it out of its neglected condition—unless one conceives his sense of duty as a kind of obsession and himself as the victim and tool of a higher will. His industry was a cold and joyless passion. Worn out, desolate and evil, he loved no one and no one loved him, but his royal existence was a heavy and degrading burden upon all. At times one could fancy that he was a sort of goblin, exciting universal hatred and abhorrence and spreading havoc through the world, an evil, sexless sprite, for the destruction of whom a hundred million human beings wore themselves out to no purpose, since he was conceived and predestined to bring to pass great and necessary earthly events. He himself ironically described the Seven Years' War as ' heroic displays of weakness.' But he set it down in black and white that : If he wanted to punish a province very severely, he would have it ruled by men of letters."

Manfred : " He said this, forgetting that the whole of Prussia was severely punished in this way during the forty-six years in which it was ruled by a King, who in time of peace as in

time of war always had much more leisure for his futile literary pursuits than for his kingly duties."

Thomas Mann: "His culture was so superficial that he imagined himself to be bullet-proof, and when he wants to express what it was that induced him to exchange the sweet tranquillity of a life dedicated to literature for the fearful exertions and bloody horrors of war, he talks of a 'mysterious instinct.' What he so describes was stronger in him than literature, it guided his conduct, it determined his life, and it is a German possibility that this mysterious instinct, this element of the demonic in him was of a supernatural nature: the urge of fate, the spirit of history."

Manfred: "What surprises me most in what you have said is the conviction, which you appear to share with Prussian historians, that Frederick's anti-imperial 'heroic weaknesses' and the 'heavy and degrading burden' which his royal existence inflicted upon all could entail any blessing to the German people. You say in praise of Frederick II. that in the second twenty-three years of his reign he atoned for the sins which he had committed in the first twenty-three years. And the image of this king, making atonement and, as it were, doing penance, has softened the judgment of many of those critics most inclined to harshness. It seems to me questionable, however, whether in the second half of his reign he did not by the 'degrading burden' of which you speak, do more harm than by his bloody civil wars, which, for all their fruitlessness, did at least revive in many Germans thirsting for glory that self-confidence that had been waning since the death of Prince Eugene. King and commoner are also in Germany like the human shades in the under-world of the *Odyssey*: they are nourished with blood.

"If, however, you conceive Frederick II. as a martyr, and call it a 'German possibility' that: 'Frederick had to commit injustice, . . . so that the earthly mission of a great nation might be fulfilled, this will probably delight Germans of the 'Rembrandt-as-educator' and the H. S. Chamberlain type, and certain mystics devoid of humour will discover another 'German possibility,' namely, that the goal of this great nation's earthly mission is sacrificial death—probably in the service of a higher

culture. In a similar—and to me equally repugnant—sense the not inconsiderable German immigration to America has often been described as cultural manure. Any one who, like myself, has some German blood in his veins is almost in danger of failing to see any humour in this.”

“THE PROSTRATION OF THE ADDLE-PATED  
CARLYLE BEFORE THE ‘HERO’”

(Nietzsche.)

Thomas Mann had no use for lack of humour. On the contrary he could not conceive of any spirit more apt for the narration of world-history than the spirit of heroic humour.

We tried to come to an agreement regarding the significance of the word humour in connection with the attitude towards history, and Thomas Mann declared that in his opinion heroic humour was particularly conspicuous in Thomas Carlyle—for example in his epic history of Frederick the Great. Manfred looked surprised and seemed to be pondering deeply; finally he said: “I am surprised that you find humour in Carlyle. Do I understand you correctly? You do not mean that he is laughable, but that his remarks are humorous. You are smiling with him not at him?”

Thomas Mann replied that Manfred had understood him correctly.

Manfred: “Do you know that Carlyle was a Scotchman?”

Thomas Mann answered in the affirmative. Manfred again reflected. Finally he said: “That has not the same significance for you as for me. In my country it is often said: A Scotchman never sees a joke. The famous author, Barrie, who enjoys a high reputation in America, repeatedly makes fun of the Scotch lack of humour. This reproach of lack of humour has been taken to heart by many people of Scotch origin, and their attempts to display humour are so thin-lipped and sour as to be often very amusing. But if you came across wags of the Carlyle type as often here as we do in New England, I think you would soon be bored instead of laughing.”

Manfred suddenly stood up, went to a bookshelf and

exclaimed: "But I think I can convince you. Here stand the six stout tomes of seven hundred pages each which this humorous Scotchman wrote about Frederick the Great. To me almost every page seems to betray the learned old maid, who would like to join in the game, but has not the bigness of heart for it."

Manfred opened one of the stout volumes. "Open it where you like," he continued. "Here Carlyle gives Wilhelmina's report, to which you referred yesterday, concerning the love-adventures of her sixteen-year old brother. The Margravine reels it off lightly and as though with a mocking smile. You remember how Bismarck once referred casually and contemptuously to Frederick's boastings of his sexual exploits. But listen to what Carlyle has to say of it. His humorous smile is distorted over pages of canting homily. Here I see two, three, five, no six times on one page the King of Saxony described as 'Beelzebub,' because he is said to have procured a girl for the young Frederick. Carlyle exclaims: 'Heavens, human language is unequal to the history of such things,' 'unspeakable.' The Princess found words, but Carlyle can find no words. None the less he goes on declaiming: 'Poor young Fritz!' 'poor brother!'; 'poor Fritz!' and again and again 'poor Fritz!' Truly, poor enough! Here on the next page the poor youth is dubbed a 'rhinoceros in the mud-bath'; here a 'rhinoceros wallowing in the mud-bath; with nothing but its snout visible, and a dirty gurgle all the sound it makes'."

Manfred seemed highly amused. "Truly, it is evident that here Carlyle and not 'poor Fritz' is the rhinoceros! Wallow in the mud-bath? Wilhelmina assures us that the Formera was as beautiful 'as Venus and the Graces'; and the Orzelska? Here is Pöllnitz's opinion: 'of fine figure, had something grand in her air and carriage, and the prettiest humour in the world. She often appeared in men's clothes, which became her very well. People said she was extremely openhanded.' If the whole story of Frederick's successes with these ladies was not—as seems probable—a forgery, or if really the Orzelska was ordered to do day-service with the Prussian Crown Prince, then she was perhaps that one woman in the whole world who ever found a considerate word for poor Frederick II., and whom the

King still remembered so gratefully in 1771. To see in such amiable creatures a mud-bath requires a quite peculiar sense of humour! Truly: 'poor Fritz,' who to the end of his life praised Voltaire's 'distinguished tone,' little suspected that the *Ordre pour le mérite* would be conferred on Carlyle as a reward for discovering a rhinoceros in the founder of the order. But Carlyle is not satisfied with this rhinoceros sermon. No, we have a second sermon on this same subject by 'Sauerteig'—this is one of Carlyle's witty pseudonyms, like his Professor Teufelsdröckh in *Sartor Resartus*, that is to say, pure buffoonery, in the style of his much admired Jean Paul. This reminds me of a particularly shameful self-revelation made by Carlyle."

Manfred opened the sixth volume and continued: "Carlyle describes here how Frederick occupied the leisure hours of his potato war of 1778 with the compilation of his *Eloge de Voltaire*. Carlyle does not go into the contents of Frederick's eulogy of his dead master, but merely remarks: its reasoning is now out-of-date; the reader will allow me to insert in its place a brand-new 'eulogy'; and thereupon Carlyle starts to serve up his teufelsdröckhian Jean-Pauliads, in which he expresses his regret that Voltaire had no Frederick William I. to see that he received properly insulting treatment in the Tobacco Parliament, at which that King used to preside over the flogging and tarring of his court-fools and Academy-Presidents. If Carlyle had his way, one should be able to say: Scratch the Russian, Frederick II., and you will find the tartar, Frederick William I. Perhaps nothing so intensified the boundless contempt of Frederick II. for German ways as the disgusting pleasantries of the Tobacco Parliament, at which his father often compelled him to be present. But at the very moment when Frederick wished only to pay honour to his teacher, this humorous and canting Scotchman desired that Voltaire might be the victim of those domestic barbarities, which Frederick in his intercourse with cultured Frenchmen and above all with Voltaire sought to forget. In another place Carlyle declares that his darling Frederick II. was at bottom nothing but a personified Voltaire."

Manfred seized another volume. "Or what do you say to



Carlyle's treatment of the Prussian claims to Silesia, over which Frederick himself occasionally made merry, and which you too this morning, if I understood you aright, dismissed with a smile? Here Carlyle solemnly rebukes the Emperor for having acquired these claims—it was at the beginning of the Thirty Years' War—and declares mysteriously: 'the account was at last settled, with compound interest—as in fact such accounts are sure to be.' With the same air of a divinely appointed judge Carlyle then proceeds to describe the First Silesian War as ending with the handing-over of her stolen property by Austria. When later Carlyle has to justify Frederick's arbitrary conduct in the Miller Arnold dispute, he adopts exactly the opposite standpoint, and can conceive nothing more prejudicial to the common weal than the maintenance of antiquated claims." Manfred turned over the pages and began once more: "Here Carlyle speaks of that 'scandalous libel by Voltaire . . . spokesman . . . for the class . . . of 'flunkies doing saturnalia below stairs'." Carlyle looked upon himself as the English prophet of Goethe, but he overlooked or purposely passed over in silence the high praise bestowed by Goethe on this 'libel' in his letters to Frau von Stein; these letters were published fifteen years before Carlyle's *Frederick the Great* was published. It is amusing that Carlyle reproduces in full Frederick's conversations with the Prince de Ligne; only the King's homosexual witticisms are omitted.

"In his whole composition Carlyle impresses me as an unsuccessful imitator of his eccentric German master, Jean Paul. There are fine things in Jean Paul, but I confess that I have not yet succeeded in getting to the end of one of his novels, and Carlyle is still more long-winded. All Goethe's objections to the grotesqueness of Jean Paul, the 'Chinaman in Rome,' are even more applicable to the Scottish imitator of the Jean-Paul manner: 'I am truly sorry for the man; he seems to live in such isolation,' said Goethe of Jean-Paul. For thirteen years Carlyle worked at nothing else save his six-volume romance, *Frederick the Great*; and it is touching—if it were not laughable—to hear him speak, after his labours are completed, of his 'tugging and wriggling through what inextricable labyrinths

and sloughs of despond . . . hugging unclean creatures (Prussian blockheadisms) to my bosom, trying to caress and flatter their secret out of them.

"Yes, what then? Did he then perhaps come nearer to the 'voice of heaven and God's truth' concerning Frederick II. than Macaulay before him? What did Goethe say when Jean-Paul tried to over-trump him? 'Jean-Paul was moved by pure contrariness to write the 'truth' about his life. As if the truth in regard to the life of such a man could be anything else than that the author was a philistine!' Carlyle too seems to have realised this finally, for he soon described his 'Frederick affair' as 'insignificant as the dung of a thousand centuries ago' and exclaimed: 'Let it then be sunk into the sea of the past!' (95) Here I find it difficult to disagree with him. I fear that Carlyle, with his 'dung,' did the Prussian cause an ill-service in the English-speaking countries."

Thomas Mann, who seemed to find little new in what Manfred had said, replied that he could only "speak with quite sincere and undiminished respect of Carlyle's powerful and fascinating history of Frederick the Great. Carlyle's heroic humour is the artistic culmination of that herculean and tenacious industry, which copes with and subdues vast masses of material—not in order to make sport of them, but in order to make everything—even what is most solemn and erudite—to a certain extent easy and diverting. In short, it seems to me that Carlyle's monumental work still deserves to be held in high honour by the German people. It is a book for soldiers and civilians, for adults and for intelligent boys, for the man in the street and for the scholar."

Manfred: "By the way, it occurs to me that I once heard Theodore Roosevelt, who had a great deal of good to say of Kaiser Wilhelm II., speak with marked contempt of Carlyle as a historian. And what Roosevelt said coincided very closely with Nietzsche's remark, of which Roosevelt was unaware: 'The forms of prostration before 'genius' and the 'hero' were discovered by that arrogant and addle-pated old grumbler, Thomas Carlyle, who devoted his long life to the attempt to infuse romance into English common sense: In vain!'"

Manfred seemed enraptured with Nietzsche's wit ; he gave an exclamation of delight, and then asked, as though embarrassed at his own outburst : " Do you think Goethe had a higher opinion than Nietzsche of his friend Carlyle's *Frederick the Great* ? "

### FREDERICK AS THE FATHER OF GERMAN LITERATURE

Then Thomas Mann, whose face expressed something approaching sympathy with the Scotch grumbler, gave the conversation a turn which made it practically a continuation of the observations made to me previously by Manfred regarding Frederick's attitude to German literature and Goethe's reply to his attacks.

Thomas Mann, in fact, replied : " It was Goethe who said of Frederick the Great that his exploits first furnished German poetry with a true, lofty and living subject."

Manfred laughed : " You are joking ! Are you trying to construe Goethe's words into their almost exact opposite by quoting them out of their context ? Or are you trying to find out whether I am familiar with the self-defence which Lessing prepared in advance against misinterpretations of his *Minna von Barnhelm*, that truly Frederician but alas ! so solitary masterpiece ? "

Hegemann : " What words of Lessing are you thinking of ? "

Manfred : " Lessing said warningly : ' . . . I will not swear that some flatterer will not arise, who will see fit to name the present epoch of German literature the epoch of Frederick the Great '." (96)

Hegemann : " Do you mean that Goethe was a flatterer ? "

Manfred : " Oh no ! He was a multitude of things, but a flatterer he was not. He was, however, very often a jester. When he was made Minister of Transport for Weimar, he wrote to the young duke, who always addressed him as thou, an official letter accepting the new dignity and ending with the words : ' May Your Highness be pleased to accept from me the most devoted assurance that in respect of this new office most

graciously conferred upon me I shall always use every effort to promote Your Highness's best interests, and thereby endeavour to prove that undying loyalty, with which I have the honour to remain Your Highness's, etc.' Frederick the Great had often anathematized the stilted German of official documents (which was almost as bad as his own 'coachman' German). It would have been well if Goethe had ceased to oppose the efforts of the great King on behalf of the improvement of the German language." Manfred laughed so good-naturedly that it was impossible to be annoyed with him, and continued in a mocking tone: "But Goethe preferred to follow his own great dictum: 'Tell it to none but the wise,' at any rate when it was a case of the secrets of intellectual great powers."

Thomas Mann smiled good-naturedly and answered: "But what mysterious secret could any sensible man possibly discover in the very simple words of Goethe which I quoted?"

Manfred: "I would ask you to read in their context those words of Goethe, which are so often quoted out of it, and you will see that they amount to a condemnation of Frederick II."

As I knew that Manfred liked in a discussion to quote direct from his authorities, and that he read passages from the works of great writers very effectively, I remarked: "I should like to hear you read this amazing context."

As Thomas Mann made no sign of objection, Manfred said: "Very well, I will read you some of the most striking passages." He took up *Poetry and Truth*, and read out, breaking off from time to time to make a comment:

"If one considers what was lacking in German poetry, it becomes clear that the need was for a subject, a national subject; there was no lack of talents.'—'In all sovereign states the subject for poetic art comes from above, and possibly the pleasure-camp (of King Augustus of Saxony) at Muhlberg was the first worthy—if not national at any rate provincial—subject which presented itself to a poet: Two kings greeting one another in the presence of a great army, all their court and military pomp about them, well-equipped troops, a mock war, festal celebrations of every kind—sufficient occupation for the outward senses, and abundant material for descriptive and narrative

poetry. To be sure this subject had a vital defect : namely, that it was merely pomp and display and could not lead to any great exploit.'—'The first true, lofty and living subject was furnished to German poetry by Frederick the Great and the exploits of the Seven Years' War.'—'Upon the lofty conception which the Prussian writers cherished of their king did they base their creations, and this the more zealously when he on whose behalf they laboured refused to take the slightest interest in them.'—'The war poems of Gleim occupy such a high place in German poetry because they were composed at the time and in the midst of the deeds which they celebrate and because their effective form, as though they had been created by one of the combatants in the heart of the battle, makes a very powerful impression on the reader.'

"It is very amusing that not only was Gleim not a combatant, but furthermore he was quite remarkably non-Prussian, because he did not suffer from hunger. His grenadiers pressing forward to die for the fatherland, amid stamping chargers and blaring trumpets, whom he describes so skilfully in the English ballad style borrowed from Klopstock, were conceived in the abundant leisure of a comfortable bachelor existence. Goethe declined to indulge in any such affectation both in 1792, when he was present at the scene of hostilities, and in 1813, when he would not allow his son to be present. Moreover none of the products of Gleim's spiritual prostitution have survived to the present day. It is much the same with the other Frederician poet, on whom Goethe bestows his compliments. Goethe says :

"'Ramler sings the exploits of his King in a different and extremely dignified fashion. All his poems are full of matter, they engage us with great and ennobling subjects, and for this reason alone have an indestructible value. For the intrinsic significance of the subject treated is the beginning and end of art.'

"It sounds almost as though Goethe meant to say : As regards the subject of Frederick, Gleim and Ramler are the beginning and the end of art. Ramler's poems, with their wealth of matter, their 'indestructible value' and their 'true, lofty and living subject' are at the present day completely forgotten, and

even Erich Schmidt, who exaggerated the significance of Goethe's euphemism (97) regarding the influence of Frederick II. on German literature, ventures to speak of ‘Ramler's rodomontades.’ What Goethe really thought of Gleim, who had ‘based his creations’ on Frederick II., is expressed so unsparingly in the introduction to his essay, *Literary Sansculottism*, directed against Frederick that one might almost imagine that Gleim's title to fame as a Frederician epic poet was based solely on the courage with which he alone tackled so unpoetical and anti-national a hero. Goethe also exposes Gleim's insignificance in *Poetry and Truth*, where he writes :

“ ‘Gleim, by nature diffuse and long-winded, hardly once achieves conciseness in the war-poems. Ramler is properly rather a critic than a poet.’ Or : ‘Gleim could as easily have dispensed with breathing as with writing and making gifts, and since he helped needy geniuses of all descriptions over the embarrassments in which they were plunged from time to time and thereby genuinely contributed to the honour of literature, he won for himself so many friends, debtors and dependents that his long-winded poems were readily forgiven ; it seemed that the only return that could be made him for his many acts of generosity was to tolerate his verses.’

“ Here Goethe indicates a way in which one can ‘genuinely contribute to the honour of literature,’ a way which Frederick II. had persistently neglected, at any rate as far as Germans were concerned. It is true he once sent the poetess Karschin a taler, but she sent it back to him.

“ Yet amid the waste of platitudes inspired by Frederick II. there stands out one work of art. Goethe continues :

“ ‘But here I must first of all make honourable mention of one work, the most genuine product of the Seven Years’ War and of truly North German national character. It is the first dramatic work to deal with the important characteristics and incidents of contemporary life, and it therefore exercised an incalculable influence—*Minna von Barnhelm*. . . . It is easily perceptible that this work was engendered betwixt war and peace, hatred and affection. . . . The hatred with which Prussia and Saxony had confronted one another during this

war still persisted after the war had ended. It was now that the Saxon felt the full bitterness of the wounds inflicted on him by the arrogant Prussian. The political peace could not forthwith attune the hearts of the people to peace. But this drama was at any rate to conjure up the image of such a peace. The grace and amiability of the Saxon ladies subdue the worth, dignity and obstinacy of the Prussians, and in the personages both of higher and of lower rank, the artist exhibits a happy combination of bizarre and contradictory elements.'

"Here, then, is one really living work of art which not only has nothing to do with Codrus, Philotas, or any other of the self-sacrificing kings who at that time furnished subject for reams of verse, but perhaps owes something to Frederick II. and to which, therefore, Goethe was anxious to do full justice. He has in mind here above all the content, for the triumph of Lessing's form, as Goethe in 1809 maintained in opposition to Falk, was won *against* Frederick II. and the French. The contents of this work being so excellent and the form so perfect, it is the more astonishing that, as though doomed to barrenness, it did not bear any notable fruit, since Germany, as Goethe says, seems after all to be the land of imitations. Goethe also says in *Poetry and Truth*: 'It is not amazing and yet it excites amazement, when in studying a literature, especially German literature, one observes how a whole nation seems unable to get free of a subject once furnished and successfully treated in a certain form, but insists on having it repeated in every possible variation.' Lessing's play gave rise to a succession of 'retired officers,' and majors in the Hussars were the darlings of the Prussian stage, but the German comedy remained unborn. And after all what could be expected from this Prussian 'nation,' in which it was thought fit to express appreciation of the genius of *Minna von Barnhelm* by forbidding its performance in Berlin. After Lessing had left Berlin in indignation in order to try his luck at the Hamburg National Theatre, he had to report even from there (4, viii. 67): "Was I not right in predicting that they would not dare to perform my *Minna*? Here performance of the play has been forbidden at the request of Herr

von Hecht (the representative of Prussia), and the latter says that he received the order from Berlin.' ”

Hegemann : “ Why was Lessing persecuted in Berlin ? ”

Manfied : “ You must apply for an answer to that question to the historiographer Preuss, who writes (98) as follows : ‘ Special mention should be made of the great dissatisfaction and distress caused (after the war) by the disbanding of the large volunteer corps. . . . The King frequently expressed his dissatisfaction with the conduct of the volunteer corps in the Seven Years’ War ; in particular, at the outbreak of the Bavarian War of Succession (1778), when he again ordered the organization of volunteer corps, for instance by Count Haerd, whose volunteer corps, in spite of its exceptional valour, was disbanded again in 1779 in violation of the King’s promise. . . . Officers and common soldiers roamed the country in 1763 and 1779 in a state of destitution ; the leaders and organizers of these excellent volunteer corps—von Kleist, Count Haerd, Quintus Icilius and other distinguished men—were, however, deeply wounded at this harsh measure.’ ”

“ On March 5th, 1763, d’Argens, in a letter to the King, jests at the harsh treatment of the Quintus Icilius volunteer corps. In his answer (10, iii.) the King pleads in excuse his difficult situation and consoles himself with the infamous words : ‘ I am dismissing the natives and keeping all the foreigners ’ (so that he should have both ready at hand for his next war !). Is not all this full of significance in connection with the treatment of Lessing ? The ill-treated Icilius was his friend ; he it was of whom Goethe said that he ‘ could venture to take liberties ’ with Frederick, and who therefore ventured twice to recommend his friend Lessing as librarian to the reluctant king. The widow of Icilius was the cause of one of the few visits paid by Goethe to Berlin. Preuss’s account of Frederick’s breach of his promise to his volunteer corps continues as follows :

“ ‘ As Lessing had touched upon this delicate subject in his *Minna von Barnhelm*, many difficulties were in 1768 (?) placed in the way of the performance of this comedy in the capital.’ Does not that cry out to heaven ? Lessing had in his *Minna* idealised the perfidious king into a good king ; that is to say,



Lessing embarked upon the 'gigantic labour of idealising the character of Frederick II.,' before which Schiller was later to recoil in dismay. And, in token of gratitude Lessing's comedy encountered 'many difficulties in the capital,' which was famed for its alleged—that is to say, Frederician freedom of the press. Is it possible to read this without indignation ? ”

Hegemann : “ Do not forget that the King was too poor to be able to keep his word.”

Manfred : “ The royal historiographer Preuss reports, however (99), that Frederick II., immediately after the Seven Years' War, expended twenty-two million taler for his entirely superfluous 'New Palace' and later (1771) no less than 244,300 taler for a military orphanage. And Preuss also reports (100) : 'Lessing wrote his masterpiece (the *Dramaturgy*) in Hamburg, whither he betook himself in vexation, because his *Minna*, afterwards looked upon as a Prussian masterpiece, was not at first allowed to be performed in Berlin'.”

Hedemann : “ At first ? It was then given later ? ”

Manfred : “ Yes, hurrah, *Minna* was performed, in Berlin and—in the French language ! *Minna de Barnhelm* ! in Berlin ! As an exercise for a girls' boarding school ? Not at all, on the leading stage of the capital for the 'cultured' society of Berlin ! This preposterous absurdity reveals the true influence of Frederick II. on Prussian literature ! Goethe does not mention the refusal which Lessing, upon closer acquaintance with Frederician Prussia, conveyed to Frederick II.—the irritable : ‘ What should I do in that accursed galère ? ’ (101). Goethe says only : ‘ Lessing . . . terse in *Minna*, laconic in *Emilia Galotti*, only reverted later to his cheerful simplicity.’ As regards the alienation from Frederick II., Goethe confined himself to describing his own :

“ ‘ And so by degrees the time approached, when all authority was to forsake me, and I was to doubt, nay despair, even of the greatest and best individuals whom I had ever known or conceived. Frederick II. still occupied a place in my thoughts above all the distinguished men of the century, and it could not, therefore, seem other than very surprising to me that I dare praise him as little among the inhabitants of Leipzig as in

the household of my grandfather. The hand of war had in fact pressed hardly upon them (102), and one could not therefore blame them for not cherishing the highest opinion of the person who had begun and continued it. They were prepared, then, to concede that he was a remarkable but not that he was a great man. It requires no great art, they said, to do remarkable things when one has abundant resources; and if one spare neither lands nor money nor blood, one can in the end achieve one's purpose. Frederick gave no proof of greatness either in his plans or in anything that he undertook. As long as it depended on himself, he made nothing but mistakes, and it was only when he was compelled to make good these mistakes that he achieved anything extraordinary, and the only reason that he attained such great fame was that every one would fain have the faculty of repairing as adroitly the errors which all so frequently commit. One has only to follow out the Seven Years' War stage by stage to find that the King sacrificed his splendid army quite uselessly (103) and was himself to blame for the fact that this ruinous struggle was continued so long. A truly great man and military leader would have got the better of his enemies much more quickly. They could bring forward in support of these views a mass of details, which I was unable to refute, and so I became conscious of a diminution of the wholehearted admiration which I had felt from my youth up for this remarkable prince.' When Goethe wrote these words, he was in the service of a petty prince, who was closely related to the all-powerful Frederick.

"Goethe could scarcely express more clearly why his boyish admiration for 'this remarkable prince' had cooled. If Goethe had continued *Poetry and Truth*, he would probably have added to this admission what he knew of Schiller's plans for composing a Fredericiad, plans which ended with the despairing cry: 'Frederick II. is no subject for me . . . I cannot feel sympathy with this character; he does not inspire me with sufficient enthusiasm to enable me to undertake the gigantic labour of idealising him,'—a remark, by the way, strikingly reminiscent of Voltaire's: '*je ne peux en conscience aimer Luc : ce roi n'a pas une assez belle âme pour moi.*' But Goethe proposes to

describe only the historical development of German literature during his own youth, and so he proceeds to enumerate the various writers who assisted in the creation of a German literature before and after Frederick's influence had exhausted itself in Gleim, Ramler and the solitary *Minna von Barnhelm*. On this subject Goethe writes in detail:

" 'Gellert's writings had for a long time been the basis of German moral culture. . . . Now, however, the time was to come when the poetic genius should become aware of itself, should create its own conditions and lay the foundation of an independent dignity . . . Klopstock combined everything required in order to found such an epoch. With the advantage of a sound and serious education . . . he bent his thoughts, in the foreknowledge of his great intellectual powers, towards the highest conceivable subject. The Messiah, a name of infinite significance, was to be celebrated anew by his genius. The redeemer was to be the hero, whom he was to accompany through earthly experience and suffering to the highest heavenly triumphs. Everything that was divine and angelic and human in this young soul was needed for the task.'

" Frederick II. would certainly have declined very contemptuously to have anything to do with the *Messiad*. Klopstock's *Messiad* is wholly dominated by Milton's influence. When Frederick II. in the Seven Years' War complained that he could no longer find time for attending to the internal affairs of Prussia (104), and instead of this wrote a long epistle to the English ambassador extending to fourteen printed pages, he congratulated the latter on the wisdom with which the English curbed the tyranny of their kings, but he also declared, ten years after the publication of the *Messiad*, that he willingly resigned 'the angels and devils to that bizarre writer, Milton, as inexhaustible subjects.' On the other hand, what Klopstock's *Messiad* meant to Goethe and his sisters from their earliest youth is vividly described by Goethe in an earlier book of *Poetry and Truth*. Regarding the Bible, ridicule of which might without exaggeration be described as Frederick II.'s favourite diversion, Goethe says: 'I for my part loved and revered it; for I owed to it almost my whole moral educa-

tion; and the events, the teachings, the symbols, the similes had made a deep impression on me and had influenced me in various ways.'—When Goethe says: 'I owed to it almost my whole moral education,' he is referring to the Bible and not to the greatness of Frederick II., as some Prussian historians and germanophiles would have us believe. In order to estimate the very much greater importance of biblical tradition than of the exploits of Frederick II., not only in respect to Gellert, Klopstock and Goethe, but also in respect to eighteenth-century German literature and moral culture in general, we may recall how Lessing himself, who was a true pioneer of enlightenment, expressed his regret that the bad example of a cynic on the throne should undermine the respect of the people for religion and sacred things, and that the rationalists of Berlin, supported by their betters, should be exercising their evil influence in all directions. But German literature can show some mighty spirits who drew their inspiration less from the Bible than Gellert, Klopstock and Goethe. Goethe continues:

"There can be no question that Wieland possessed the most exquisite talent of them all. . . . How many of his brilliant productions belong to the time of my academic studies.' And Goethe then proceeds to describe Wieland's influence in detail.

"In short, it seems to me that what the hard-worked quotation from Goethe about the 'first true, lofty and living subject' really means is that Frederick's wars did indeed furnish to minor poets of the type of Gleim and Ramler and Karschin a more lofty subject than the pleasure camp of the King of Saxony or the imitation of Anacreon, but that the only important work that owed its origin to these wars was *Minna von Barnhelm*, which was condemned to exclusion from the intellectual world of Frederick's capital; so that 'the poetic genius created his own conditions and laid the foundation of an independent dignity.' These were Goethe's words, and Schiller sang:

Proudly the German dare assert,  
That he himself created his own worth.

"Why try to disregard this? And, if the modest testimony of the Swabian Schiller does not convince you, then listen to that of the Prussian, Ernst Moritz Arndt, from Rügen: 'It is doing Frederick II. too much honour to make it appear as though all German enlightenment and high endeavour emanated from Berlin. . . . No, it was from Southern and Central Germany that German art and all the higher culture took its rise. Go to Swabia and the Rhine, and the names of Germany's greatest men of genius will echo in your ears. Many a small town of the Empire has contributed just as much to the higher culture of Germany as all the sandy country of the Marches. Moreover, it is impossible for so sternly disciplined a military state to produce that genius and art which can only bloom where human life is gay and untroubled. That is rare in these climates and unknown under these governments.' This was the opinion of Arndt expressed in his *Spirit of the Age* shortly before the Battle of Jena."

Hegemann: "I confess that I have not read much of Gellert or Klopstock or Wieland, but I was always assured by my teachers that the works of these writers would never have been written but for the almost divine inspiration of Frederick the Great, who founded, strengthened and led on to victory the dignity and self-respect of the German people."

Manfred: "I know. Wieland said: 'King Frederick is undoubtedly a great man, but may God preserve us from the happiness of finding ourselves under his rod, *sive* sceptre!' And hence the Prussian university-teachers deduce the right to regard the 'Rossbach of the Germans' as the hippocrene of Wieland's muse. Yet I fancy that closer investigation of this stream shows it to be so muddy that Frederick's admirers would do well to look for something better. But take the *Messiad*, concerning the genius of which there can be no doubt. The ten first and most important cantos appeared between 1748 and 1755, that is to say, long before, through the wonder-working battle of Rossbach, Frederick the Great's French poem on the French 'behinds' found its way into pornography and the 'first true, lofty and living subject' found its way into German poetry. The precocious Klopstock therefore composed his

greatest work at a time when Frederick II. was still only known as a partisan of the French and—more than that—at a time when Frederick II. was known as the cause of the most disgraceful humiliation ever suffered by Germany, for it was no other than Frederick II. who had made it possible for Marshal Belle-Isle, the representative of France, not merely to vote in the election of the German Emperor on a footing with the German Electors, but also to boast himself the wirepuller of the imperial marionette. Frederick II. once bestowed the nickname 'marionette' on the Bavarian emperor, Charles VII., whom Louis XV. appointed almost simultaneously French lieutenant-general and German emperor, and who only owed his crown to the outrageous manner in which, under Frederick II., 'Prussian particularism revolted against the German commonwealth,' if I may make use of Bismarck's famous expression. Bismarck pronounced this revolt 'harmful and dangerous'; he did not see in it any great German exploit by which German dignity was redeemed. Do the Prussian admirers of Frederick II. really dare to maintain that this 'harmful and dangerous' act of their great king filled Milton's admiring disciple at Schulpforta with that moral dignity which he needed in order to begin his *Messiad*?

"But perhaps I am unjust. Probably the conduct of the Prussian historians is worthy of admiration. It might in fact be called Goethesque, for Goethe declared: 'Patriotism spoils history,' but he also remarked: 'Whoever has the supreme power is right; one must bow before him reverently,' and 'Written history is one great euphemism.' That is to say: It is the duty of the scholars and poets of a nation to make its past delectable.—Yet one is often tempted to ask whether the Prussian historians, in making their deductions from the teachings of Goethe and other writers, were not sometimes too daring, and whether they did not run the risk of proving the assertion of de Maistre that 'the writing of history is a ceaseless conspiracy against truth.' However that may be, Ottokar Lorenz is right when he says: 'The Frederick the Great who is frequently presented to us at the present day wears quite a different aspect from Goethe's Frederick.' In any case the

Prussian historians deserve praise for so bravely tackling 'the gigantic labour of idealising' their great king, from which Schiller had recoiled in dismay; and it is only to be hoped that those disturbing documents, many of which have most thoughtlessly and unnecessarily been published in the last few years, may be got rid of as soon as possible.

"When it is attempted to write a Prussian history of literature, the historiographers find themselves confronted with great difficulties. We may recall the adventure of the Berlin professor, Erich Schmidt: He tried to defend the attitude of Frederick II. towards German literature, and endeavoured to make Frederick's discussion with Gellert regarding German art redound to the glory of Prussia. Gellert, who was a modest, perhaps somewhat timid man, had ventured during this conversation with Frederick to hint: '*Des Augustes feront des Virgiles.*' Gellert may have thought this mild admonition of the French King of Prussia permissible, because he may have suspected that the thrice-conqueror of Silesia would say exactly the same in his *Dissertation*. But even for this mild audacity Erich Schmidt can hardly forgive poor Gellert; at all events the great Berlin professor makes Frederick II. give 'the lapidary, truly crushing answer: Saxony has had two Augustuses.' 'Lapidary' this rebuke (as Erich Schmidt calls it) would indeed have been, if it had not been for the unfortunate fact—admitted elsewhere by the Berlin professor himself—that the Prussians stood at a 'very markedly lower level of culture,' as compared with the Saxons, and if the visits of the Crown Prince Frederick to the court of the Saxon Augustus had not sufficed to move the King to imitate all his life the baroque music and architecture then popular in Saxony (very much to the distress of his architects, who, unlike Frederick, had amassed some knowledge between 1728 and 1786).

"Yes, Frederick's 'rebukey' would have been 'lapidary,' instead of disrespectful and insolent, if those pioneers of German literature, Gellert and Lessing, had not been Saxons; if the Weimar court musician and Leipzig conductor, whose bust adorns the monument to Frederick in the Siegesallee at Berlin, had not been a Saxon; if the pioneer of German literature,

Klopstock, had not acquired his truly amazing education (which Goethe extols) at a royal school in Saxony (in Prussia he could not possibly have acquired it); if Gottsched, whom the great Frederick II. addressed as 'the Saxon swan,' had not fled from his Prussian home, to take refuge in Saxony from the Prussian recruiting officers; if Winckelmann, without whom the rise of German literature seems unthinkable, had not, though born in Prussia, indignantly named the Prussian king 'the scourge of the nations' and exclaimed: 'My fatherland is Saxony; I recognise no other, and there is not one drop of Prussian blood in my veins'; if the Prussian historiographers did not fondly quote the words of appreciation with which Frederick tried to entice back Winckelmann, who had sought refuge in Saxony and become famous; if Frederick had not, in spite of this, spoken contemptuously to his bosom friends of the—not excessive—claims of Winckelmann; if finally, the young Goethe, instead of studying devoutly in the Prussian Halle, had not first visited a Saxon university, before he turned his steps, not to Halle or Königsberg, but to that Alsace, which Frederick's genius for statesmanship had secured to the French. It will of course be remembered that Herder too was only able to develop his talents by leaving his East Prussian home, in which he had spent not one happy day, with bitter lamentations at his lack of education. He took refuge with Goethe and Wieland, not in the capital of Frederick II., who had announced to an admiring world that he wished to make Berlin 'the temple of great men,' but in Weimar, and—such was the will of the mocking spirit of world history—again under an Augustus, a small Saxon Augustus, not the great German Augustus, whom poor Gellert had craved, and so brought upon himself the 'truly crushing answer' of Frederick the Great and the ridicule of the Berlin University professor, Erich Schmidt.

"The hope of gradually transforming all these facts or putting them on one side as merely casual or secondary is based on the sincere joy experienced by the German people when Frederick did finally at Rossbach beat the French, after he had repeatedly invited them to his country as allies."



“EXPÉDIENS FRIVOLES.” BEFORE AND AFTER  
ROSSBACH

Manfred continued: “In his *l'Histoire de mon temps* Frederick makes great game of the Elector of Hanover, who conquered the French at Dettingen in 1743, and after the battle made no objection when a laurel crown was placed on his hat. Frederick II. had good reason to jest at a victory over the French; Rousseau too made mock of this battle of Dettingen in his *Nouvelle Héloïse*: ‘The French soldier is very easily overcome, when he is commanded by court flunkies whom he despises, and this happens so often that one has only to await the court-intrigues and the opportune moment, in order to be sure of defeating the bravest nation on the continent.’ The incapacity of the French ‘*généraux timides et sans nerf*’ often furnished a target for Frederick’s jeers. At any rate it was not the Elector of Hanover who fetched the French into the country. Why then is the glory as a champion of the German cause reaped by Frederick at Rossbach by an hour-and-a-half’s fighting against admittedly incapable generals better than the laurels of the Elector of Hanover, which Frederick held up to ridicule? Because the ‘tame battle’ of Rossbach (as Frederick himself called it) made so absurdly evident the superiority of a single command over the confusion created by squabbling generals, as well as the superiority of Prussian flogging-drill over the old method of fighting with hired mercenaries? The reports describing how the troops of the imperial army and the French took to their heels in dismay were really very amusing.

“Frederick II.’s favourite sister, Wilhelmina, throws some precious light on the battle of Rossbach in her letter of September 11th, 1757, that is to say, shortly before the battle. She describes the approach of the imperial army (which was still as little a match for the much-flogged new Prussian army as were the French before 1792) as follows:

“‘The second column of the imperial army presented us with a truly absurd spectacle. Last Thursday (September 8th) it was in the defiles behind Coburg, when a Jewish army-

contractor dashed up at full speed, yelling: "The Prussians are here! The Prussians are here!" At once the peasants set loose their horses, unharnessed their oxen and fled into the mountains. One portion of the troops took to its heels; another fled shrieking to a hill. The Protestants collected together and shouted: "Long live the King of Prussia, our saviour!" Finally, by dint of flogging, the peasants were forced to take their carts out of the defile. The troops were assembled again, and driven to Meiningen in utter confusion like a flock of sheep. The Württembergers, who were also on the march, turned back.'

"A few weeks later, at Rossbach, Frederick II. took over the rôle of the 'Jewish army-contractor' described by Wilhelmina, and the whole world laughed at the jest."

Hegemann: "How unjust you are! The panic flight of the enemy was surely only possible because even an army-contractor becomes terrible when one is trembling before the spirit of the great king."

Manfred: "You think that the Prussians, with or without the 'spirit of the great king,' would not have understood equally well that in such crazy cabinet-policy wars the most sensible thing to do is to run away? Frederick II. wrote to his highly deserving general, von Wobersnow, that he was 'a mediocre general, who could not have commanded the army more foolishly if he had been drunk' (105); and when, in place of Wobersnow, who had advised against the battle, the dictator, von Wedell, expressly selected by Frederick, was ignominiously beaten by the Russians at Kay on July 23rd, 1759, the 'spirit of the great king' consoled himself for his lack of judgment in his letter to Wedell: 'I had a suspicion matters would go badly . . . the fellows lost their heads . . . well, it's no use thinking of it . . . it is not your fault that the rascals ran away in such a scandalous fashion.' And what was the position at Kunersdorf or even at a 'victory' like Zorndorf? 'This battle we did not win; it was thrown to us. The victory was only ours because the Russians did not want it,' said Frederick to de Catt. He quite realised that even the much-flogged Prussian army was not prepared to back up all the royal blunders.

When Captain von Brinken of the Steinwehr regiment asked for promotion, the King refused with the words: 'His regiment always ran away from the enemy, and he was always obliged to run with it.' The disabled soldiers of the Syburg regiment were also excluded from all assistance. The King declared: 'At Zorndorf the regiment ran away so fast that I only got them back the second day, and at Kunersdorf they did not stay eight minutes under fire.' The same thing happened with other regiments. When, long after the war, an appeal was made for help for the disabled soldiers, the King answered: 'The regiment shirked all through the war. I have nothing for such people.' It may have been a consolation to 'such people' that many others shared their lot. The royal historiographer Preuss (106) begins his panegyric of Frederick's care for the disabled with the words: 'We must here admit from the outset that, according to official figures, in the year 1779 there were still 3443 disabled men belonging to Frederick's army unprovided for.' According to official figures and sixteen years after the building of the 'New Palace' had been begun!

"Since, therefore, the Prussians, in spite of this good treatment and in spite of being continually threatened with the Prussian rod, could not stay eight minutes under fire, even in the close proximity of their great king, it could not but afford huge sport to all Germany to see the unflogged French, under their new general, Soubise (who was 'mediocre' but not 'drunk'), also run away ignominiously after an hour and a half. Any one who finds in such victories or defeats subject for grief or pride seems to me about as reasonable as the dice-player who thought himself a genius because he threw three sixes. Surely any one seeking subject for laughter can find nothing more laughable than the Prussian flogging discipline, which had even got into the bones of the generals. Thanks to this discipline, the Prussian general, Fink (of whom Frederick said that he would become a second Turenne), was able at Maxen, at the desire of the Austrians, to order General Wunsch, his subordinate, to deliver himself into Austrian imprisonment. And the Prussian General Wunsch, who had made his escape with 1800 mounted soldiers, obediently came back and surrendered. Is

that not even more amusing than Rossbach! But Rossbach has become more famous.

"Rossbach furnished special cause for jest in the streets of Paris, where the pious party were inciting the people against Louis XV. and Madame de Pompadour, and where Frederick II. after the battle of Rossbach was extolled as Alexander and named 'the Great.' Frederick was justly extolled in London as 'the Great,' for he had made himself really very useful to the English. And Germany joined in the applause! People laughed over the battle of Rossbach, much as they did later over the cobbler of Koepenick, and in return for this jest the patient Germans were even prepared to be grateful when Frederick II. once more tried to form an alliance with the French and renew his former league against Germany. The Germans—though not all of them—even continued to laugh gratefully when Frederick, the great emancipator of Germany, in just indignation and, as he expressed it, 'as a revenge for the frightful pillage committed by the French,' gave permission to his brother *Henri* and Marshal Keith on January 22 and 23, 1758, to allow pillage—not, to be sure, in France, but at least in Saxony. Goethe describes in *Poetry and Truth* the anti-Frederician spirit of the Saxons, and these unhappy Saxons certainly had reason. Old Prince Eugene in 1734 had occasion to express his indignation at the shameless excesses committed by the Prussian troops in an allied country under the eyes of their Crown Prince. In 1758 the Prussians treated Saxony as an enemy country, and there was no Prince Eugene to protect it from the pillage that had been sanctioned by the King of Prussia."

Hegemann: "What Goethe says after his stay in Leipzig of the cooling of his admiration for Frederick the Great seems to me open to question. It seems to me possible that he was the dupe of exaggerated Saxon descriptions of Prussian war atrocities."

Manfred: "Reports of war atrocities should always be accepted with caution, above all because unfortunately they always contain an element of truth. The credibility of such reports increases, however, when they emanate not from the victims but from the perpetrators of the atrocities. When a

member of the Prussian army like Captain von Archenholtz, in his *History of the Seven Years' War*, which is a classic in Prussia, describes the sufferings of the Saxons, and expressly adds that he was an eye-witness, it is difficult for the admirers of Frederician humanity to convince any one that too much was said instead of too little. Archenholtz gives the following account of the fate of the city of Leipzig during the Prussian occupation of 1760-61 :

“ ‘The city of Leipzig had to pay heavily for its love of the fatherland. The inhabitants had desired to retain the imperial troops within their walls as allies of their king, and had openly expressed this desire. They were to be punished for this. . . . Huge sums of money were to be paid and enormous quantities of supplies to be handed over. The magistrate . . . referred also to the written promises of the King, imposing upon these exactions a limit, which it was now proposed to exceed. This limit was a money fine of 500,000 Reich talers, which had already been paid. These representations, however, were of no avail, and when the protests were continued, recourse was had to violent measures. . . . The most distinguished public servants and the richest merchants were thrown into prison and treated as criminals. They were crowded together in cells, where they lacked the most ordinary conveniences. No beds or chairs or warm food were allowed them. At first a hundred-and-twenty shared this fate. After ten days, however, all were released save seventeen of the most eminent, who had to endure imprisonment for four months. . . . They were forced to live in the most filthy conditions and had long beards like Jews. “Now, you dogs ! Are you going to pay ? ” was the regular morning greeting of the tax-collector, who reaped advantages for himself out of this barbarous treatment.’ Admirers of Frederick II., like Delbrück and Lehmann, swear that their great king meant to conquer Saxony. Even the scholars who doubt this will be compelled to admit that Frederick II. at any rate reaped “moral conquests” in Saxony. As regards the ill-treatment of the people of Leipzig, Archenholtz was moved to moral indignation perhaps more on behalf of the manly Prussians than of the unmanly people of Leipzig who

were suddenly attacked in time of peace. At any rate he continues :

“ ‘Persons who were accustomed to the greatest comfort had to content themselves with the coarsest victuals, to stretch upon the hard ground bodies that had been pampered in the luxury of the age, and to regard as a feast a bowl of soup secretly conveyed to them.’

“ In view of these revelations of the worthlessness of ‘ the written promises of the King ’ and of the manner in which he allowed his own countrymen to treat a neutral city which they had attacked, it is not surprising that gruesome reports were also current regarding the conduct of the enemy troops of the Austrians, or even of the French and Russians, and these reports were doubtless only too true. What is war if not an education in bestiality ? It is the more surprising then to find Archenholtz making admissions such as the following regarding the storming of the Prussian town of Schweidnitz (1761) by the Austrian general, Loudon. Archenholtz writes :

“ ‘ Loudon had, in a formal address to his troops, forbidden the plundering of the city, and promised them in return a recompense of 100,000 gulden. The Walloon grenadiers replied with the unanimous shout : “ Lead us on to glory ; we do not want money ! ” . . . After an assault lasting three hours . . . the fortress was conquered . . . without a preliminary siege. . . . It was owing to the promise of 100,000 gulden in place of booty that the disorders were partially checked. The plundering lasted four hours . . . until the humane efforts of the Prince of Lichtenstein and of Count Kinsky, who finally pressed into the town with a body of cavalry, put an end to the excesses. The Russian grenadiers, however, took no part in these excesses, but set an example which was as unexpected as it was praiseworthy. They sat themselves quietly down on the ramparts which they had climbed, and remained there each by the side of his weapon.’ This is the account of Archenholtz. As, however, the Seven Years’ War is to be a glorious page in Prussian not in Russian history, is the behaviour of the Russians, brutalised by continuous feminine rule, to be explained as an emulation of ‘ Prussian manly discipline ’ ?

“Of the excesses of the French Archenholtz also gives gruesome descriptions, which probably contain only too much truth. It is the more surprising then that he writes as follows of the occupation of Bremen by the French : ‘The Marquis d’Armentières, by his magnanimous conduct and good discipline, did much to alleviate the painful position of the city.’ Similarly, W. L. Manger, in his *Architectural History of Potsdam*, (107) writes : ‘Potsdam was likewise occupied by Austrian troops under the command of General Esterhazy from October 11th to 14th, 1760 ; here, however, there was no plundering or destruction either in the castle, in the city or at Sans Souci.’

“It will be seen from this that even in the second half of the frightful Seven Years’ War magnanimity and discipline were still possible. The more sinister then are the accounts of the outrages of Frederick the Great, who was responsible for the three Silesian wars, and whom his admirers, on the strength of the fine but hollow sentiments to which he frequently gave utterance, would like to extol as a champion of humanity. You may imagine that the reports given by non-Prussians of Frederick’s ‘humanity’ are, if possible, even more unfavourable than those of the Prussian major, Archenholtz, which I have read you. I will give you some specimens.

“In 1757, Pitt, the leading English statesman, wanted to arrange an alliance between Saxony and Prussia, but Frederick rejected the idea. Frederick wrung from the King of Saxony the permission to march through Saxon territory, and he declared that he was the friend of the King of Saxony and of his country. It is well known how Frederick revenged himself on Count Brühl by having his castle, Hubertusburg, plundered and laid waste. When in 1760 Frederick thought that he could reconquer Dresden in two or three days, all that he achieved was the reduction of a large portion of the town to ashes. He excused himself for this frightful devastation by saying that he had given his artillery the express command only to fire on the walls ; the city was only set on fire through failure to obey his orders. He had only fired at the tower of the Kreuzkirche, because the defenders had placed cannon on it. When it was pointed out to him that at most the tower could

only afford space for such diminutive cannon that they would not be able to fire beyond their own lines of defence, Frederick declared that the tower had been used for making signals. The French count, Maranville, who was an eye-witness, gave to Marshal Belle-Isle (the advocate in Paris of a Franco-Prussian alliance) the following account of the frightful devastation of Dresden by King Frederick: 'July 22nd, 1760. When the arrival of the imperial army saved the new part of Dresden, the King of Prussia resolved to burn the old city, because he saw that there was no longer any hope of conquering it.' On July 21st Maranville wrote: 'The old city was almost entirely destroyed by red-hot cannon balls and shells; yesterday, after the plundering of Friedrichstadt, the King had this too set on fire with torches. These acts confirm what has long been said regarding the black soul of this prince. Such conduct is irreconcilable with the principles either of war or of humanity.' On August 3, Maranville wrote: 'The King of Prussia before his departure gave orders to cut down all the trees in the walks of the large royal garden, thus destroying one of the finest avenues in Europe. At the beginning of the war a number of beautiful and valuable marble statues were removed to the pavilion. They were dragged out and hacked to pieces; the beautiful espaliers and even the orangery were likewise destroyed. I would not have credited such infamy if I had not seen it with my own eyes.'

"Frederick II.'s irresponsible conduct finally horrified even such an ardent admirer of the King as was the English ambassador, whose reports to London contain some remarkable admissions. On January 3rd, 1761, Mitchell wrote to London: 'Private and most secret: The very harsh manner in which the country of Saxony is treated fills me with horror, although there is now the fatal plea of necessity for adopting measures, which were practised before that necessity existed.' On January 7th, Mitchell wrote from Leipzig: 'I am informed that the King of Prussia has made a demand of two millions of crowns upon this town, a sum much exceeding their force, as many of the richest merchants are retired from this place and the day before yesterday fifty or sixty merchants were arrested.'



. . . This affair cannot fail to make a great noise all over Europe, as the merchants were arrested four days after the fair was opened, notwithstanding a solemn declaration made for their protection and the immunity of the fair.'

"On January 16th, 1761, Mitchell wrote from Leipzig: 'The demands of contributions of all sorts made by the Prussians in Saxony are most exorbitant and far exceeding the abilities of the country to comply with, so that many of the subjects are now actually under military executions, equally ruinous to the country and to the officers employed upon that service, who, when they have once tasted the sweets of plunder, cease to be soldiers.'

"On February 5th, 1761, Mitchell wrote from Leipzig: 'The premeditated and deliberate plundering of Hubertusburg has been attended with circumstances of meanness, that I am really ashamed to narrate them, yet they are too public to be concealed. I therefore leave them to the pens of the injured and outraged Saxons; such of (Frederick's) ministers as have any virtue mourn in secret for what has been done and for what may further happen. . . . I took occasion . . . to throw in a hint of the effects that reports only of our transactions here had had at the court of Russia. At first he (Frederick) reddened, and then favoured the discussion; but it will have no effect, for ferocity has seized his mind and cruelty has seized his heart.'

"All these things did not prevent the King, in the midst of his readings with de Catt or the composition of French verses, from expressing his horror at the brutality of war: 'A fine glory! These cities in ashes, burnt villages, inhabitants reduced to misery. Let us talk no more of it. My hair stands on end.' But this moral indignation of the King did not enable him to check the plundering of his soldiers even in his immediate environment. Again and again we find in de Catt's fragmentary diary, which was always written immediately after the events, entries like the following: 'Everything was plundered; my house was emptied; I saved it for an hour and a half before the plundering. I had a man thrown from the top storey; in vain, the house shared the same fate as the

others'; or on August 4th, 1758: 'They are plundering, commanders and men alike. The officers put no check on any one.'

"Is there not a remarkable unanimity between the four reports, namely, of the Prussian major, Archenholtz, of Goethe, the citizen of Greater Germany, of the Englishman, Mitchell, and of the Frenchman.<sup>1</sup> Would you like to hear that of a Saxon? Do you know the letters written by the witty Rabener to Gellert and others regarding the burning of Dresden? One of them gained publicity at that time and excited a great sensation all through Germany.

"Rabener had, in anticipation of the destruction of the city, disposed of his property and manuscripts in two separate houses. Both were burnt. Rabener wrote to Gellert on August 9th, 1760: 'There was not much firing at the ramparts, and any one who says that the fire wrought such devastation in the town and that bombs were thrown at the Kreuzkirche because shots were fired at the besiegers from the belfry is simply making cruel jest of our misery.' To another friend Rabener gave a detailed description of the pillage, which robbed himself and many others of everything, but was borne by many with dignity: 'In a corner were seated some pothouse politicians, who were busy drawing up a plan of campaign for Daun, but could not come to an agreement regarding one minor detail, namely, whether the King of Prussia and his army should be made prisoners of war, or whether it would not be better to put them all to the sword. I was for the latter, but I was outvoted. A parson's widow kept on drawing me aside and whispering in my ear: "We ought to thank God! It was only for the sake of our dear religion that the King of Prussia shot us down and destroyed our houses"—"But hang it all, Ma'am,

<sup>1</sup> It is not surprising that during the world war these old French and English reports of the humanity of the most beloved German king were given publicity in France and England as alleged proofs in justification of the most bitter charges against Germany. Examples of this are: *De Frédéric II. à Guillaume II.*, by A. Chuquet (Paris, 1915), and *The Life of Frederick the Great*, by Norwood Young (London, 1919). Every nation, it was said, has its tyrant, but it is reserved to the Germans to extol the humanity of such a hero. Now that the days of war-propaganda are happily over, the time has perhaps come to undertake a dispassionate investigation of these foreign charges.

what have my wigs to do with religion ? ” (for I had just learnt that a thirty-pound shell had destroyed my whole collection of wigs). “ Never mind,” she answered, “ it will be all right in the end, thank God for it ! ” This confounded canting woman kept on pestering me without mercy.’

“ When Rabener was informed by the Marquis d’Argens that Frederick wished to know him, Rabener replied in a very charming French letter and stipulated that he should be presented to the King by a German, and that the conversation should be carried on in the German language. ‘ Is it for a Frenchman to make a German author acquainted with a German king in the heart of Germany ? ’ wrote Rabener to Gellert. Why could not the Prussian Frederick II. have as much sense of fitness as the Saxon Rabener, who was the same age as himself ?

“ While the Germans were extolling Frederick as their deliverer from the French, the great King had no more ardent desire than to renew the French alliance. Immediately after his so-called victory of Lobositz, he had secretly tried to form an alliance with the French, and at the time of the battle of Rossbach had three or four ‘ irons in the fire,’ as he himself described the proposals for peace and alliance which he made to the French behind the backs of his English allies. And he felt so certain of achieving his end. Six weeks before Rossbach he wrote to the French commander-in-chief, Richelieu, the flattering letter, in which he referred to the ‘ sixteen years’ alliance between Prussia and France ’ and declared : ‘ I confide my interests to the King, your master, in preference to any one else.’ To the King of France ‘ in preference to any one else.’ Thus it stands in the fair copy. In the rough draft of the letter which is still extant Frederick wrote : in preference to the powers ‘ *qui sont ennemies de la Prusse par état,*’ which is only another form of saying what Frederick repeated all through his life, namely, that France and any other enemy of the Empire could count on the alliance of Prussia in a struggle against Germany and were dependent on the alliance of Prussia, and that therefore Prussia could always count with certainty on allies, on regeneration, on greatness. At any rate so long as Germany

was sufficiently powerful to make it worth while for her enemies to keep her in check by the corruption of disloyal Germans and of Prussia, the most disloyal of all. By '*ennemies de la Prusse par état*,' that is to say, 'professional enemies of Prussia,' Frederick really means any one who dares fight on behalf of German unity and power. Frederick II. lit up this abyss of Prussian political wisdom in all its detail in his testament of 1752.

"There are indeed admirers of Frederick II. who would fain see in the appeal to Richelieu a stroke of political and military genius, because, through being invited to engage in peace negotiations in this way, Richelieu was kept in suspense and prevented from joining up with Soubise at the right moment, and so the victory of Rossbach became possible. That may be, but this would go to prove that Frederick II.'s boundless confidence that he was indispensable to the French as an ally was justified, that the French were as little prepared as were the Russians later, after the battle of Kunersdorf, to sacrifice this King of Prussia who was always ready to fight against the German Empire, and that in fact all those things which Frederick himself described as his '*expédients frivoles*' before the battle of Rossbach, and which elicit the sympathy of most of Frederick's admirers, were in fact very 'frivoles.' If you are looking for humour in world history, can there be anything more laughable than Frederick's only too well justified, heroic confidence in the French king? Anything more absurd than Frederick's '*expédients frivoles*' before the battle of Rossbach?"

Neither Thomas Mann nor myself could at the moment remember anything about these '*expédients frivoles*.' . . Manfred gave us more detailed information :

" '*Expédients frivoles*' is the phrase with which Frederick in his *Histoire de mon temps* casually referred to his machinations—may I use the word or would it be more German, that is to say, more polite, to call them intrigues?—before his one victory over the French. This phrase is one of the witticisms which make Schiller's condemnation of this book seem justified. 'The Voltairian manner . . . of gliding over important details with a light witticism is not one that specially merits emulation in the writing of history. . . . The caprices which governed the

practical life of the great Frederick also plainly guided his pen'; thus did Schiller write to Körner in 1788. I believe that Schiller does an injustice to the originality of the great King of Prussia when he calls his gliding method Voltairian. Voltaire, who had played little part in practical politics, was inclined as a writer of history to use his wit rather for the purpose of emphasizing than of gliding over. But far more flagrantly than Schiller do the Prussian writers of history misunderstand their hero when they take his '*expédiens frivoles*' tragically, and view them with consternation, instead of gliding over them with a light witticism.

Hegemann: "The King has often been praised for his dry wit."

Manfred: "But his buffooneries are often invested with a false dignity, with pathos. Listen, for instance, how the encyclopaedic Koser (108) distorts Frederick's '*expédiens frivoles*'."

Manfred seized Koser's *King Frederick the Great*. As usual he had his finger on the right passage immediately, and he read: "'Deeply agitated by the painful workings of his dark fancy, Frederick one evening—it was September 22nd—sent at a late hour for his reader, the Abbé de Prades, and exclaimed: 'I want to read you my latest verses, perhaps the last that I shall ever make.' The Abbé began to read them, but immediately the author tore the poem from his hand, and began to declaim it fervently, wetting the paper with his tears.' Could anything hit off more exactly the conceited scribbler who forces his verses on people's attentions than Koser's description of his great King? Koser continues solemnly: 'At no time did Frederick set down as much verse upon paper as in these bitter summer and autumn months of 1757'."

I replied to Manfred in some indignation: "I cannot understand how you can find anything laughable in the agony of the King at this moment of his utmost need. Koser is speaking of the time immediately after Frederick's losses of Kolin, Hastenbeck and Mays, after the occupation of Berlin and the defeat of Grossjägerndorf and after the Treaty of Kloster Zeven, by which he feared to lose his powerful English ally."

Manfred: "I know, I know; it was the time before the victories of Rossbach, Leuthen and Zorndorf, and then he was defeated again at Hochkirch, Kunersdorf, Maxen and Landshut. The Prussians, in spite of their wonderfully superior new drill, lost under Frederick II. about as many battles as they won; there is an old and generally accepted theory that in battles one of the two antagonists always wins and is then named the victor. In Frederick's case it is really amusing how on various occasions he left the field of battle to find a place of safety and only learnt afterwards that he had 'won' the battle. In this respect battles differ from card-playing or stock-exchange gambling; I personally know men who in the latter frequently win more than fifty victories out of a hundred, and who yet do not burst into tears and talk of suicide if their successes fall below that number, although their stakes often exceed the economic value of Frederick's Prussia. Voltaire, whose business talents Frederick II. extols in the introduction to the *Henriade*, would not have been as rich as he was if he had given as little heed to his dealings on the bourse as Frederick did to his bloody undertakings."

This comparison of great national conflicts with card-playing and stock-exchange speculation seemed to me in rather bad taste. Manfred replied: "I too should have avoided this comparison, if Frederick II. himself had not so frequently employed it. When his troops were setting out on the First Silesian War he said to the French ambassador: 'Tell your master that I shall play his game and, if my cards are good, I will share the victory with him.' After his victory at Friedberg he wrote to Louis XV.: 'I have paid the bill of exchange which you drew on me at Fontenoy.' You see that Frederick is not afraid to speak of gambling and the stock exchange. And if he was frequently unsuccessful in his rash speculations, what after all is to be expected of a general, who frequently could not be disturbed even in reference to the most important matters, because for several hours every day—if the sounds of his flute were not echoing through the Prussian camp—he was engaged in the composing and declaiming of verses. It was like a sort of colic. Do you remember what de Catt says about it in his

diary? Or are you acquainted with the note which the Tsarina, Catherine, wrote in her edition of Denina's *Essai* on Frederick the Great, at the passage where Denina speaks of the 'Elegies' composed by the King during the war? (109)

"The Tsarina had previously received the visit of Prince Henry, by which Frederick II. had designed to counteract the influence of the German Emperor at St. Petersburg. The Tsarina then wrote the following note in her Denina: 'Prince Henry declared that his royal brother always had such verses in readiness, and at moments of crisis drew them out of his pocket, in order that people might be astonished at his still preserving sufficient presence of mind to write delightful poems.' Bismarck spoke to the same effect though with little appreciation: 'Frederick II. sent poems from the field with the inscription: "*Pas trop mal pour la veille d'une grande bataille*".' Prince Henry's remark, Bismarck's words and Frederick's correspondence—for instance, with Jordan—bear out to a surprising degree the amazing statements to be found in de Catt's diary regarding the manner in which Frederick II. employed his time between two battles.

"Voltaire's manner of receiving the threats of suicide which Frederick transmitted in verse and prose to Argens and his sister Wilhelmina, with the request that they should be sent on to Voltaire, is really delightful. The relations between Voltaire and 'his vassal, Frederick II.'—I make use of Goethe's expression in order to give point to the observation—were still far from amical after Voltaire's ill-treatment at Frankfort. But Voltaire could believe the King who 'had a craving for applause'—as Bismarck said of Frederick the Great—capable even of putting into effect his dramatic hints of suicide. Voltaire said: '*Panecdote est curieuse*'—but he seems none the less to have understood that the threat of suicide was designed above all to impress the French gallery, and he therefore faithfully handed it on to Richelieu, Tencin, Argental, Choiseul and others for whom it was intended. The French commander-in-chief, Richelieu, received Voltaire's letter with the report of Frederick's threatened suicide about the same time as he received Frederick's peace-negotiator. This coincidence was probably

what Frederick had intended. Frederick knew that Richelieu belonged to the party of the French Minister of War, Belle-Isle, who did not approve of Madame de Pompadour's Franco-Austrian alliance against Prussia, but wanted to support the King of Prussia as a valuable obstacle to German greatness. Consequently Richelieu did his utmost to revive Frederick's waning joy in existence and to preserve France from such an irreparable loss. This was perhaps very much what Frederick had hoped to achieve with his threat of suicide.

"Voltaire further and above all complied with the request of Frederick II. and his sister Wilhelmina to pave the way for further secret peace-negotiations between Prussia and France. Voltaire's friendly attitude towards Frederick's craving for peace is expressed concisely in two passages which occur in those years in Voltaire's letters about 'Luc.' 'Luc' is Voltaire's pet-name for Frederick II. (There are friends of Frederick who maintain that the word 'Luc' should be read backward and interpreted as an allusion to Frederick's lucubrations on this subject, for instance in his song of victory after Rossbach.) (110)

"'Luc,' writes Voltaire in 1759, 'is still Luc; now as ever he creates complications for himself and for others, fills Europe with amazement, bathes it in blood, reduces it to poverty and all the while makes verses.' But in the same year Voltaire writes in a tone of persuasion to another influential Paris friend: 'Luc wants peace. Would it after all be such a great misfortune to let him have it, and so retain a counterweight against Germany? Luc is a good-for-nothing, I know, but is it worth while to ruin oneself in order to be rid of a good-for-nothing, whose existence is moreover necessary?' (Voltaire knew the secret of Prussia's greatness.)

"Yes, the sixty-year old Voltaire is prepared to journey to England, where he has influential friends, in order to work for the peace which he inwardly desires not only in the interests of humanity and as a French patriot, but also and not least as a large landowner, tax-payer and capitalist. But after he has done his duty in this way, he amuses himself by consoling Frederick. 'I enjoyed the revenge of consoling a King who



had ill-treated me'; and he consoled very humorously! He pretended to take Frederick's threat of suicide quite seriously, and his letters of consolation are among the most entertaining things he ever wrote."

(This allusion was to give rise on the following day to the discussion regarding the flogged poets.)

I could no longer endure the flippant tone of Manfred's references to the King at a time when the latter was tortured with anxiety, and I interrupted him almost impatiently: "On what ground do you doubt that Frederick longed for death, and exhibit him in the light of an undisciplined boy, who threatens his French teachers that he will do himself an injury?"

Manfred: "In the diary of the unfortunate Grillparzer there occur the following words (he was thirty-six years old when he wrote them): 'It seems as though the end were near. But I shall die weapon in hand. What matters is that one should not surrender one's thoughts, that one should be lord of oneself every moment. I have confessed to no one, complained to no one! I shall die weapon in hand.' While Frederick II. tearfully read his verses in praise of death to his brother or his reader (no audience is despised by the minor poet; this Abbé de Prades was soon after put in prison by Frederick for some unknown reason), perhaps he even sometimes took his own tears seriously. But the eagerness with which he spreads the rumours of his intended suicide, and the manner in which he does so, are to me sufficient proof that he must at the outset have hit upon the splendid idea of making capital out of his Werther-like disposition and therewith alarming Voltaire and—owing to Voltaire's extensive connections—the French statesmen who were counting on the hostility of Prussia to the Empire: '*J'ose prédire qu'il ne leur sera pas facile de réparer ma perte,*' wrote Frederick to Wilhelmina at the beginning of September, 1757 (the letter was to be handed on to Voltaire), and this conviction that he was indispensable to the French is a sentiment which is constantly expressed in his letters in one form or another.

"Moreover the fact that Frederick showed his poison-pills to his reader suggests that the matter afforded him more pleasure

than anguish. Frederick had threatened suicide for three years and had survived humiliations like Hochkirch, Kunersdorf and Maxen, when—according to the legend—he let the poison-pills roll out of his pockets by the campfire at Torgau, and displayed them to his sympathetic grenadiers. Some one who read this told me that he could not help thinking of a sentimental youth, out of whose pockets, when he is in virtuous female society, there tumble unexpectedly all kinds of rubber instruments not intended for the public eye, and who then has the impudence to boast of them. Is it possible that the irony of history so willed that among the grenadiers who were to be affected by Frederick's suicidal instruments was the man at whose attempted suicide the King had once jested? In Lucchesini's diary Frederick II. relates: "A soldier had been condemned to three years' labour at the galleys for attempted suicide; the King modified the punishment as follows: 'Let him be bled, then rubbed down twice with a sponge, and sent back to his company; for he has had an attack of insanity'." But even if this grenadier was privileged to see the evidence of the King's suicidal mania, he would certainly have held his tongue, for Frederick demanded and ensured that his soldiers should fear their superior officers more than death.

"It seems as if Frederick II.'s sister Wilhelmina were less disposed than the King to scoff at suicidal mania; in spite of the otherwise mocking tone of her memoirs, she seems to have taken her brother's threats seriously. At all events she declared immediately that she too wished to die. A kind of suicide club was formed, which certainly made an impression on her fatherly friend, Voltaire, to whom it was described in detail. The sisterly lamentations became so loud that Frederick thought it well to curb them. (She did, in fact, die soon after, which gave Frederick an opportunity to publish his affecting ode on her death; Voltaire too was invited by Frederick II. to celebrate the deceased in verse, and to circulate the poem 'in the four quarters of the globe.' No one reading the two poems could have any further doubt that Wilhelmina was the victim of a war unjustly waged against Prussia, and that her devoted brother had none but the purest and most peaceable intentions.) In

order, while she yet lived, to spare Wilhelmina's shattered nerves, Frederick sent her in future two different types of letter, one of which, drawn up in cipher, exhorted her not to lose heart, and to continue her efforts on behalf of peace-negotiations with France—she has two or three 'irons in the fire'; the other letter written at the same time and intended for handing on to Voltaire and others, was filled with such touching descriptions of Frederick's yearning for suicide and freedom as might well adorn a sentimental novel of that period.

"The so-called *Political Correspondence of Frederick the Great*, which so staggers one at the first reading, is particularly entertaining in the volume consecrated to the months preceding the battle at Rossbach; but the entertainment would be still more complete, if some one would some day supplement the so-called political letters by making a collection of all Frederick II.'s writings, verses, dictations, negotiations, and actions, both political and non-political, during the successive days of that period. Only such a collection would enable one to appreciate to its full and diverting extent the versatility of the sovereign who wielded both lyre and sword."

Manfred took up a volume, and continued: "This volume contains only the 'political' letters of 1757, but it furnishes quite an entertaining assortment. Let me give you a few specimens selected at random:

"The English Government had learnt that its ally, Frederick II., was secretly negotiating with the French, and on May 6 the English ambassador was instructed to admonish the King. Here I find the answer of the loyal ambassador: he writes to his Government in London that he could not insult Frederick by such an imputation. What stupid Englishmen there still were at that time! On May 19 Frederick writes for English consumption: '*Comment peut-on croire que j'agissais d'une manière aussi infâme envers le roi d'Angleterre?*'; but he again sent his proposals to Paris, for he thought that he had made sure of the French.

"Frederick's admirers would like to plead in excuse of this fresh perfidy the English defeat at Hastenbeck and the subsequent convention of Kloster Zeven. But this convention was

only concluded on September 8, 1757 (and moreover never recognised by the English Government), while Frederick's attempts to betray his ally began almost a year earlier (immediately after Lobositz)."

Manfred turned over the pages and continued: "Frederick's suicide-correspondence with Voltaire and the sending of his rhymed defence of suicide begin at the middle of August 1757.

"On August 14, Balbi went to Paris as the new Prussian peace-negotiator, this time equipped with full powers.

"On August 29, Frederick tells the English ambassador of his hope of a Turkish invasion and of the Prussian go-between who is expending 50,000 pounds sterling in the attempt to stir up warlike sentiments in Constantinople. At the same time Frederick demands from the English 670,000 pounds, and this sum was afterwards paid to him annually. The English ambassador remarks: 'This subsidy is larger than England had ever given to any foreign power whatever.'

"On September 5 and 6, Frederick announces to his sisters in Sweden and Berlin his impending death.

"On September 6, Frederick writes to General Lehwaldt—who was beaten at Grossjägerndorf—in East Prussia; in German, for this ignorant general did not know French: he and his troops are not to be downhearted. On the same day Frederick writes also to the French commander-in-chief, Richelieu, and asks—for peace. In the letter of the Prussian king to the French commander-in-chief he writes: '*Il s'agit d'une bagatelle, Monsieur; de faire la paix, si on le veut bien . . . je ne puis me persuader qu'une liaison, qui a duré seize années, n'ait pas laissé quelque trace dans les esprits; peut-être que je juge des autres par moi-même. Quoiqu'il en soit enfin, je préfère de confier mes intérêts au roi votre maître plutôt qu'à tout autre.*'"

"On September 9, while Frederick is waiting for the answer of the French commander, he informs his sister Wilhelmina—not in cipher, that is to say, in a letter to be shown to Voltaire—of his renewed determination to die, and exclaims with firm and kingly resignation: '*Je ne suis touché que de l'infortune d'un peuple que je devais rendre heureux.*'"

"On September 10, Frederick writes to the same sister in

cipher in a confident tone: '*je n'abandonnerai pas l'espérance,*' which, according to the editors of the letters, refers to the peace-negotiations in Paris.

"On September 15, Frederick again writes cheerfully to his sister: '*nous approchons à grands pas l'hiver et celui-là mettra fin à toutes nos querelles.*' In the good old times the campaigns mostly ceased towards the end of each year. Frederick, whom later the battle of Rossbach was to surprise almost more than it surprised the enemy, was already in September regarding the year's campaign against the French as ended.

"On September 16, Frederick II. replies to his minister Finckenstein (who had from Berlin advised making peace with France): '*j'ai mis les fers au feu,*' which refers to his peace-negotiations in Paris (through Balbi and others) and with Richelieu, the French commander-in-chief in Germany (through Eickstedt).

"On September 17 Frederick writes two letters to his sister Wilhelmina. The first, which is quite short and in cipher, counsels his sister not to despair, for '*c'est dans ces circonstances où il faut avoir de la fermeté, où elle serait inutile.*' The second letter, for handing on to Voltaire, is not in cipher and runs to one, two, three, four small printed pages. This letter contains perhaps Frederick's best collection of gleanings from Voltaire's tragedies, *Brutus* and *La Mort de César*. Frederick toys indefatigably with the expressions: '*esclave, liberté, patriciens de Rome, Brutus, Caton, liberté de ma patrie, tyrannie de la maison d'Autriche.*' Then he solemnly agrees to his sister's proposals that they should together consecrate themselves to a voluntary death: '*Quant à vous, mon incomparable sœur, je n'ai pas le cœur de vous détourner de vos résolutions. Si vous prenez la résolution que j'ai prise, nous finissons ensemble nos malheurs et notre infortune.*' . . . Let it be left to Frederick's admirers to decide whether he really wished to drive his favourite sister to a premature death, or whether he was only trying to humbug Voltaire and the French.

"On September 18, there follows a private letter in cipher, in which Frederick hints to his sister that he is prepared, in order to save himself, to accept even the most ignominious conditions

which might be imposed by the French: ‘*Je prévois que les meilleures conditions qu’on pourra obtenir de ces gens-là, seront humiliantes et affreuses; mais on se tue de me dire que le salut de l’Etat l’exige, et je suis obligé d’en passer par là.*’ The contrast between this ‘*on se tue*’ and the former threats of suicide must have soothed Wilhelmina’s anxiety, and perhaps appealed to her as a writer of satirical memoirs.

“On September 18, Frederick sent a message in German to Moritz von Dessau that ‘a grave disagreement is said to have arisen between the Princes Soubise and Hildburghausen.’

“On September 20, Frederick once more, in as good German as he could muster, gave the following estimation of the French forces: ‘I could easily tackle the force that is facing me here, but the numbers of the enemy are such that, even though the spirit of Prince Eugene were hovering above to aid me, I should not be able to make front everywhere.’

“On September 21, Frederick II. staggers his minister, von Finckenstein, in Berlin, with a specimen of his Latin, a subject which, as we know, Frederick never completely mastered: ‘*mais, mon cher, ma devise est à présent: Magnibus in minibus et minibus in maximis,*’ in which perhaps Finck von Finckenstein, who was versed in Prussian classicism, and certainly modern exponents of the literary king, perceived a witty allusion to the old ‘*Magnus in minimis et minimus in maximis.*’ Nothing reveals more clearly the diplomatic superexcellence of the great king than his Latin. In the case of ordinary German schoolboys bad Latin is mostly attributed to lack of industry, and all they get for it is a scolding and a flogging. On the other hand, Frederick the Great, who also learnt no Latin, was able to unravel and re-combine very skilfully the causal nexus of things. With diplomatic skill he placed the rod at the beginning of things: only flogging, we are told, thwarted the self-sacrificing ambition of the Crown Prince to learn Latin, and flogging and bad Latin remain to the present day the imperishable titles to fame of the great martyr. No wonder that Frederick II. was proud of this Latin success, and that he ostentatiously displayed his ignorance of the language, instead of discreetly holding his tongue like less successful whipping-boys. Even if he could not,

like Maria Theresa, win the hearts of Hungarian noblemen with his Latin, it was none the less excellently adapted to win the admiration of the less exacting Prussian nobility. In his particularly loquacious days before Maxen, Frederick was betrayed into the admission: 'When I was young, I wanted to idle away my time . . . my sister said to me: "Are you not ashamed to neglect your talents?" Then I began to read; I read novels' (III). (Thus did the brave Latin scholar educate himself. *Magnibus in Minibus*—That is the true Frederick.)

"On September 23, Frederick sends to Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick '*la grande nouvelle que les Russes se sont mis en chemin pour quitter inopinément la Prusse.*' Thus, by a premature announcement of her death, did the Empress of Russia save the Prussians in the East in 1757, just as in 1762 she decided the issue of the whole Seven Years' War in favour of Frederick, 'fortune's darling.'

"On September 22, Frederick receives the news of the meeting of his peace-negotiator, Eickstedt, with Marshal Richelieu. The Marshal appears to have welcomed the suggestion, conveyed to him in the most flattering terms, that he should aid the King of Prussia in his secret repudiation of his allegiance to England, and he immediately sent an express messenger to Versailles. Richelieu's only objection was that the King of Prussia had apparently already sent other negotiators with peace-proposals to Paris, whereby his—Richelieu's—task was rendered more difficult. Eickstedt reports: '*Il ne pouvait se défaire de l'idée que le roi de France ne soit déjà informé, puisque l'Abbé Bernis lui avait écrit: "Je vous félicite de ce que vous ferez la paix."*' Richelieu's position is not quite clear. He did not belong to the war-party of Madame de Pompadour, with whom, as the King's first chamberlain, he ventured to measure his strength, until Louis XV. put an end to this reckless presumption with the cool question: 'Monsieur de Richelieu, how often have you been in the Bastille?' Richelieu considered the alliance between France and Austria a mistake, and was in favour of the policy advocated by Frederick II., namely of sparing Prussia, as the most faithful ally of France in opposing

the otherwise superior strength of the German Emperor. In any case Richelieu remained where he was with his victorious army, instead of joining up with Soubise, who was a bad general, but a man of honour and a friend of Madame de Pompadour. Richelieu was an experienced general; Soubise was a beginner. The Prince von Hildburghausen, with whom, as senior, Soubise had to share the command, was the incapable leader of the imperial troops. Maria Theresa had already tried to get rid of him in 1749, when she jestingly offered him to the Dutch, who were at that time looking for a general in Vienna, but the Dutch ambassador, Bentinck, answered: 'Thank you, but we already have enough and to spare of that sort of general.' Thereupon Hildburghausen secured for himself a position in the army of the districts of the Empire, which was worthy of him.

"On September 24, Frederick II. begins to see that he is hampering Richelieu's efforts on behalf of peace by letting loose too many Prussian peace-negotiators in Paris. Frederick therefore bids his peace-negotiator Balbi keep himself 'buttoned up' for a time: '*que vous vous teniez à présent tout clos et boutonné. Sa Majesté a choisi un autre canal.*' This order from Frederick is signed '*Le conseiller connu.*' In the reports regarding the peace negotiations which are being carried on at the same time by his sister Wilhelmina, we find also such mysterious signatures as '*celui que vous connaissez*' or '*le tout-puissant.*' Thus at this critical time do the brother and sister turn to account the experience gained in those childish games at riddles and secret names, of which Wilhelmina gives an amusing account in her early reminiscences.

"On September 26, Frederick writes a letter, in which he commands his peace-negotiator Balbi to offer to Madame de Pompadour the principality of Neuchâtel as a present, '*de bonne foi*' and '*sa vie durant.*' On September 30, he writes to him again: '*comme l'affaire principale pour arriver à mon but est que nous nous rendions favorable Madame de Pompadour par l'offre de la principauté de Neuchâtel et de Valangin, sa vie durant. . .*' Frederick II. had moreover already on July 7, that is to say, two months before the English defeat at Hastenbeck and Kloster Zeven, written to his sister, Wilhel-



mina : ' Since you wish to assist in the great work of peace, I beg you to send Mirabeau to France. I will bear the expense (!) He can offer the favourite up to 500,000 francs for peace, and even go much further in his offers if she can be induced to procure us some advantages. You realise how cautiously I must proceed in this matter . . . if they should hear a syllable of it in England, everything would be lost '."

When Manfred came to the mention of Madame de Pompadour and of Frederick's hope of bribing her, Thomas Mann interrupted the reader with the following attempt to justify the great King : " Certainly, the Pompadour was only a butcher's daughter, the wife of a publican and a pimp, and herself a pimp into the bargain—that I grant you. But, in the first place, what is the use of being an enlightened despot if one cannot overlook such trifles ? And, in the second place, the strumpet, with her shrewd little head, was more than fascinating . . . she showed almost no trace of the obscenity from which she was sprung and which remained her natural element. . . ."

Thomas Mann was going on to give further details of Madame de Pompadour, but Manfred appeared so astonished at his remarks that he finally stopped short. Manfred, after a glance at the speaker, as though to confirm the evidence of his own ears, said : " Am I really listening to the brilliant author of *Death in Venice* ? It seems to me that Frederick's incapacity to respect those placed above himself and to appreciate their motives was never more absurdly evident than in his behaviour towards Madame de Pompadour. At first he persecuted her with insulting verses (in emulation of the pious party at Versailles and of the Paris mob), and then, when he needed her, he thought that he could bribe her. Why ? Because she was of bourgeois origin or because he himself as Crown Prince had accepted money as a bribe from Austria ? The letters in which he begged for this money in the tone of a down-at-heel lieutenant are not among the least illuminating items in his voluminous correspondence. That any one should be so amazingly disinterested as Madame de Pompadour actually was Frederick II. could obviously neither understand nor believe. I am unable to look upon Madame de Pompadour as a pimp or her

father, the army-contractor, who enjoyed and deserved the confidence of the powerful Paris brothers, as a butcher. The more intelligent part of the French people, as well as the wise Prince Kaunitz, were on the side of Madame de Pompadour, who, in spite of or thanks to her bourgeois origin, had enjoyed a very much better education than was, for instance, within reach of persons even of princely rank in the Prussia of that day. Moreover, as the active friend of the best artists of her nation, she rendered worthier service to her country than did Frederick II. or other Prussian princes. The reason for Frederick's flagrant misunderstanding of Madame de Pompadour was certainly not that it was impossible for her to be legally married to Louis XV. so long as the old Queen of France was still living, and so long as in France, unlike Prussia, there was no possibility of a morganatic double marriage. Who would have been more ready to dispense with the priestly blessing than Frederick II., who liked to dub himself a philosopher and freethinker? He had been an admirer of Madame de Pompadour's predecessor in the bed of Louis XV., the Duchesse de Chateauroux, whose picture still adorns Sanssouci. Frederick had written to her that Prussia owed her undying gratitude. Why? And why the intense aversion to Madame de Pompadour? The answer is plain, though also remarkable and un-German. Under the Duchesse de Chateauroux Frederick II. had twice been able to fight for France. Madame de Pompadour, on the other hand, had dispensed with him—with him, Frederick, who had always boasted of being France's most faithful and indispensable ally against Germany. And he had been forced to fight against France, he, who even after the battle of Rossbach, still declared that he could not accustom himself to the necessity of regarding the French as his enemies. In the face of the injustice done to him by Madame de Pompadour, it was with a mixture of satisfaction and indignation that Frederick discovered her plebeian origin. He could have pardoned her for being a wanton, but for sinning against the time-honoured privilege of the French aristocracy to supply their sovereign with mistresses from their own circle Frederick II. could not forgive her, the less so since, in spite of his teutonic father, he had put forward such

convincing claims to be reckoned among the aristocratic vassals of the French King.

"I may have been guilty here of some playful exaggeration, but I do believe that I have hit upon the true explanation of Frederick II.'s aversion to Madame de Pompadour, and that it is perhaps bound up with a laudable element in Frederick's nature. Voltaire called the Christian Europe of his time a republic of princes, and Frederick II. immediately after repeated this remark of his teacher—in his testament of 1752. Louis XIV. was the supreme figure in the history of this republic, and Frederick II. was honestly resentful at the insult to the Roi-Soleil implied in the presence of a plebeian in the bed of his great-grandson. Frederick was doubly resentful when this base intruder prevented the most ardent admirer of the great Louis from fighting for France. '*Je ne la connais pas,*' he said, and refused to have anything to do with her."

Unfortunately my notes do not include the detailed reply with which Thomas Mann supported his contention that "obscurity remained the element of Madame de Pompadour." Manfred answered him :

"In that case it seems the more remarkable that Frederick II., on July 7 and on September 26 and 30, 1757, tried to secure the goodwill of Madame de Pompadour by the offer of 500,000 francs and, *sa vie durant*, his principality of Neuchâtel. The sacrifice of the beautiful principality seems to have cost Frederick some heartburning, and the hope that it would revert to him after the death of Madame de Pompadour seems to have been continually present with him during those days. Yes, the consoling '*sa vie durant*' seems so to have engaged his thoughts that on September 28, when he again writes to Wilhelmina one of the non-ciphered letters with threats of suicide, the phrase '*sa vie durant*' slips in in the most mischievous way : '*je ne demande que la mort . . . le parti que doit prendre un homme qui sa vie durant a pensé comme Caton et qui veut mourir tel.*' *Sa vie durant*—he was troubling himself unnecessarily, for Madame de Pompadour was not corruptible. The Duc de Richelieu is said to have accepted at this time a present of money from Frederick II., but the fact is not authenticated

and seems the more unlikely as Richelieu knew how to provide for his own needs. He plundered so ruthlessly, in Hanover and elsewhere, that the Parisians nicknamed his castle built at this time, '*pavillon d'Hannovre.*' Frederick avenged these plunderings—on Saxony.

"Frederick's threat of suicide of September 28 closes with the suspicion that Argens may have omitted to send Frederick's rhymed 'Defence of Suicide' to Voltaire, or that Voltaire may have failed to receive it for some other reason. The King therefore implores his sister to send a copy to Voltaire, and says that he himself has also sent one to him: '*P.S.—J'ai trouvé moyen de copier l'épître à d'Argens, je vous l'envoie, en vous suppliant d'en envoyer une copie à Voltaire, c'est ce que j'ai fait de même.*' The royal '*j'ai trouvé moyen*' is touching.

"On the same day on which he declared himself ready to present Neuchâtel to Madame de Pompadour, Frederick issued orders to Ferdinand of Brunswick regarding the French who might be taken prisoners in outpost fighting: 'The officers he can release on parole and the men he must keep safe and see that they are well looked after.'

"On September 27, thus in the midst of his threats of suicide, Frederick II. proves his resourcefulness by sending to Count Finckenstein an order regarding certain royal silver, of which 'the intrinsic value should be about 400,000 taler,' and which is to be 'minted with a sufficient quantity of alloy to supply me with at least 800,000 taler in this coin.' This is the beginning of the continued debasing of the currency which earned for the coins of this period the name Frederician 'tin plates.'

"On October 1, Frederick II. writes to the same Count Finckenstein, perhaps in explanation of the debasing of the currency which he just ordered, not of poison, but in a more manly strain: '*Nous sommes abimés, mais je périrai, l'épée à la main.*'

"On October 8 Frederick received from Voltaire a lightly mocking exhortation to manly fortitude. He replies to Wilhelmina: '*J'ai ri des exhortations du patriarche Voltaire, je prend la liberté de vous envoyer la réponse.*' This answer to Voltaire

contains also the famous lines, which are to be found in every Prussian history-book :

*Pour moi, menacé du naufrage  
Je dois en affrontant l'orage  
Penser, vivre et mourir en Roi.*

"These are also the words which Erich Schmidt's Frederick the Great pronounced solemnly on the day of Rossbach ; the words which Heinrich von Treitschke described as a self-revelation, when at the Emperor's birthday celebrations he declared : ' So long as Prussian hearts beat, they will hold this self-revelation in honour.' These lines are in fact a plagiarism from a famous French poem. (112)

"On the same day on which he composed this verse, Frederick replied to his sister's last report concerning the peace negotiations, containing the comforting news : '*J'ai vu l'ami de celui que vous savez.*' The editor of the letters conceives this to be an allusion to Marshal Belle-Isle, that is to say, the '*tout puissant*' representative at Versailles of the policy of a Franco-Prussian alliance. Wilhelmina continued : '*Il m'assure . . . qu'on souhaite fort de se raccommoder avec vous. . .*' This comforting news is conveyed on October 16 by Frederick's secretary to Finckenstein at Berlin. Belle-Isle was the French Minister of War.

"On October 13 follows the report of the other peace-negotiator, namely Eickstedt, regarding his second interview with Marshal Richelieu. Eickstedt relates how, in strict accordance with the King's instructions, he had pointed out to Richelieu the difficulties which ever since 1672 France had always encountered whenever the French King had fallen out with Brandenburg. Eickstedt declares : '*Je lui fis voir, en revanche les grands services que l'électeur de Brandebourg lui a rendus l'an 1681 et 1683,*' these being the dates of the treaties between the Great Elector and Louis XIV. and also of the French capture of Strassburg, of which Frederick thus conveyed a reminder. Then follows an outspoken condemnation of Frederick's undiplomatic poetic activities. Richelieu said : '*qu'il ne prétendait jamais critiquer un grand roi, mais que votre*

*Majesté, pendant la paix, avait choqué par picoter sensiblement, ce qui entre autres, armait l'impératrice de Russie,* a rebuke to Frederick which must be allowed between old allies, and by which Richelieu intended to say that Frederick II. had not only drawn upon himself the antagonism of Russia, but also, by his tactlessness towards Madame de Pompadour, had created difficulties for the French supporters of the Franco-Prussian alliance (to which Bismarck also once expressly referred). Further, as regards the peace-negotiations now to be prosecuted by Richelieu, the latter is displeased with the over-anxious assiduities of the King of Prussia: '*Votre Majesté en a fait parler à trop de gens, au maréchal de Belle-Isle et d'autres.*' Richelieu knew very well how intrigues were spun in Versailles, and the competition for French favour among Frederick's envoys seems to have given him the impression of extraordinarily unskilful management. Frederick, however, looked upon himself as a very clever fellow, as a '*trompeur et demi.*'

(Frederick's peace-envoy referred to above, Baron Georg von Eickstedt, was, by the way, a remarkable person. Reading his reports, one gets the impression that he still hoped to be able to complete the education of his King. Already at the beginning of the Seven Years' War, when Eickstedt was sent by Frederick II. to the German princes, in order—as Frederick's disciple, the Duke of Württemberg, expressed it disapprovingly—to egg them on 'against Emperor, Empire and the good of the fatherland'—that is to say, to prepare the way for the 'League of Princes' of 1785, Eickstedt found frequent occasion to make it clear to his master that the opinion held of the Prussian King in the Empire was that 'he was a great man, but also a great criminal' and that he had an 'overhasty tongue'.)

"On October 17, Frederick again writes to Wilhelmina a non-ciphered letter in the heroic style, and on the same day he informs her in cipher: '*Les Français viennent de signer une neutralité avec le pays de Magdebourg et de Halberstadt.*' At that time Frederick seems to have been certain that he had succeeded in keeping apart the two French armies under Soubise and Richelieu, so that he would only have to deal with

Soubise and Hildburghausen, who were at loggerheads with one another; and he writes proudly: '*Pour les Français, ils n'entendraient pas nommer mon nom et je compte cependant leur parler de telle manière par des actions, qu'ils regretteront, mais trop tard, leur impertinence.*' That sounds almost manly, but by '*impertinence*' Frederick means the audacity of the French, that is to say, of Madame de Pompadour, in trying to manage without Prussia as an ally.

"But Frederick II. still hopes to get round Madame de Pompadour and that he will not be forced to 'renounce the French' (this is how Frederick speaks in his testament of 1782 of the alliance with France which still seemed to him an almost essential factor of Prussia's policy of hostility to the Empire), and so, on October 20, Frederick's secretary is able to write to Count Finckenstein that the King has decided to send another peace-envoy to Paris: '*je veux bien Lui dire en confidence que c'est sur Haeseler que le Roi, de son propre mouvement, a jeté les yeux pour l'envoyer à Paris y porter les propositions de paix.*'

"Then at length comes the Rossbach triumph. Seydlitz, acting on his own responsibility, and in spite of the unwillingness of Frederick (who was lingering over his dinner and would not believe in the necessity of a battle), succeeded in falling upon the French and the imperial army, which had been without provisions for three days, while they were on the march. The enemy troops scattered in consternation before the new Prussian military drill, just as the Prussians had scattered in 1806 before the new French tactics. On September 14, 1783, Frederick II. told his faithful Lucchesini 'a great deal about the battle of Rossbach, which was begun by the cavalry and completed by the infantry in less than twenty minutes.' It was one of those almost incredible accidents or absurdities of war such as overtook Frederick II. with disastrous results at Hochkirch and Maxen. The two generals of the opposing armies, Hildburghausen and Soubise, were unable to join forces until the last moment. Hildburghausen wanted to fight. Soubise, who had perhaps received information from Richelieu that Frederick II. had been imploring for peace, was determined

not to fight, but only to manœuvre. His army was even before the battle, and for reasons still unexplained, compressed in a narrow defile in a state of most perilous disorder, when suddenly and unexpectedly it was attacked by Seydlitz.

“ Frederick the Great lost 165 men at this battle and instantly became a German hero. He immediately composed his poem in glorification of the French ‘behinds,’ with its homosexual and obscene allusions, and then resumed his efforts to obtain Voltaire’s intercession on behalf of peace between France and Prussia. Count Saint Germain, who was fighting with the French army, wrote to Paris: ‘Had the enemy pursued us with energy, our whole army would have been destroyed. Doubtless this was not desired, and it is certain that the King of Prussia gave orders to spare our forces and destroy the Germans; his Hussars sent back several of our soldiers, after treating them with great consideration. It is impossible to praise too much the delicacy and magnanimity of his behaviour towards our prisoners.’ (113)

“ Among the imprisoned French officers Frederick II. also sought and found peace-intermediaries. He declared to them: ‘I cannot accustom myself to thinking of you as my enemies.’ He further assured them that he did not propose to arrange for any rejoicings over the victory, which indeed grieved his heart; that in any case the French had been badly led.’ And so on in the same strain!

“ Frederick’s cossetting of the French prisoners after the battle might seem to prove his humanity, if it had not unfortunately been done at the expense of the German prisoners, who were compelled to relinquish their comfortable quarters to the French. Voltaire, who was continually urged by Frederick to work for peace, received news of this preferential treatment of the French, and handed it on. It is not surprising, therefore, that Voltaire on one occasion learnt from Frederick that a wounded French officer on the battlefield of Rossbach had loudly entreated for an enema and that: ‘*cent personnes officieuses se sont empressées pour le lui procurer.*’ In view of Frederick’s zeal on behalf of the French, one can hardly refrain from wondering whether the King did not himself administer



the enema, and whether this did not perhaps furnish the inspiration for his poem on the victory of Rossbach :

*Ah, quel spectacle a plus de charmes  
Que le cul dodu des héros ?*

"In any case, Frederick and his brother Henry found occasion to treat the French prisoners 'in the most gracious manner' and 'to do many courtesies to the wounded,' as Frederick's secretary reports to Count Podewils."

Thomas Mann, whom Manfred had by no means succeeded in convincing, held to his more flattering estimate of the great king and said : "Frederick the Great was a martyr. He had to do wrong and to lead an irrational life ; he dared not be a philosopher but was forced to be a king, in order that the earthly mission of a great nation might be fulfilled. He did not betray this earthly mission of his nation, and I am very glad to be able to reply to your imputations by passages from the letters of this martyred king. To Voltaire, for instance, he wrote : 'I will not sign peace save on conditions that are compatible with the honour of my nation.' Or to d'Argens : 'I shall never survive the moment which compels me to conclude a dishonourable peace. No arguments, no eloquence will ever persuade me to subscribe my own shame. . . . I have said it and I repeat it : Never shall my hand sign an infamous peace. I am firmly resolved to venture everything in this campaign and to take the most desperate measures, in order that I may either triumph or else end my life with honour'."

Manfred : "These assurances made by Frederick to d'Argens were intended for handing on to Voltaire, and the latter was to take them as an expression of Frederick's intentions, on which he could base his peace efforts. That Frederick would have been prepared to waive his conditions in order to conclude the negotiations is proved by the letter in cipher, dated September 18, 1757, in which Frederick frankly confides to his trusted Wilhelmina that he is 'under an obligation' to accept even the most shameful conditions which the French may impose. A Prussian King always does his duty !"

Hegemann : "Frederick the Great was possibly merely

trying to calm the fears of his sister, who was consumed with anxiety for his life. In reality he would certainly have preferred to die sword in hand, or, if necessary, by his own act, rather than to sign a dishonourable peace."

Manfred: "Even so, it is hardly possible to ascribe more than a literary value to Frederick's famous words: '*Mourir en roi.*' In 1759, when Frederick had fared very much worse in the field than in 1757, not only did he continue to make verses after the Voltairian pattern and to live after his own fashion, but he also himself drew up the terms of a peace proposal, which could only be described as honourable by one who should, let us say, regard the Peace of Tilsit as the consummation of Prussian glory. In this peace proposal of October 1759, published by Reinhold Koser with all the King's mistakes in French, Frederick II. declared himself ready to relinquish his western and eastern possessions. The first King of Prussia, Frederick's grandfather, had his eldest grandson—that is to say, Frederick's elder brother, early deceased—solemnly baptised 'Prince of Orange,' possibly with a view to proclaiming to the world that the King of Prussia was called upon to defend German claims from Eastern Prussia to the Western outposts. (114)

"Prussian historians have tried to instil into their countrymen the insane delusion that Prussia could once more bring into being the empire of Charlemagne, extending from the Meuse to the mouth of the Danube, although it was only the Hapsburgs who ever, by their conquest of Burgundy, the Netherlands and Hungary, succeeded in bringing this dream of a great united Central Europe to the brink of realisation. This was under Frederick III.; this most lethargic of all the emperors did more for the enlargement of the German empire than the hysterical and verse-mongering King of Prussia, Frederick II., of whom the historians of Prussia speak so boastfully, but who failed to perceive what was self-evident. 'For centuries we belonged to the same empire as Austria-Hungary,' said Bismarck (10, vii. 1892); 'that is a historic legacy from the past, but it is also a necessity of modern politics.' This necessity was never more compelling than in the time of Frederick II., and

failure to perceive it led the King to make his ignominious peace offer of 1759. He had forgotten his *mourir en roi*.

"One of the opening chapters of the first volume of Koser's *Frederick the Great* is entitled: 'To Memel and the Meuse.' This theory of Germany's obligation to guard frontiers is one of the main boasts of the Prussian legend. Frederick II.'s peace proposal of 1759 abdicated the 'Watch on the Rhine' to the French, and the East Prussia of the Teutonic Order to the Russians. Frederick fondly hoped to be indemnified for these sacrifices either by '*La Saxe*,' '*soit enfein quel pais lon voudra pourvu quil ait de l'ongand pour la brulure*'; and when Finckenstein and the Prussian ambassador in London had talked him out of this fragrant hope of a 'balm for the burnt,' Frederick exclaimed: 'Cannot I make a bargain (*n'y aurait-il point de troc à faire*) and exchange the Duchy of Cleve, Prussian Guelderland and the principality of Mörs for Mecklenburg?' The idea of indemnifying himself at the cost of the weak—of Mecklenburg and its ecclesiastical owners—appealed to Frederick; and this founder of the 'League of Princes' was already at that time recommending that Russia should be compensated for the war by a piece of Poland.

"But Frederick was soon forced to abandon these hopes of making the defenceless pay. He was at that time engaged in the composition of his 'Parody on the Preacher Solomon, in the manner of Voltaire,' and was trying most earnestly, with the aid of his new and estimable reader, de Catt, to avoid in this composition the hiatus and other faults of style. He interrupted this work, as de Catt relates in detail, in order, against the advice of all the generals, to sacrifice an army under Finckenstein in the most wanton fashion—even the most ingenious idolaters of Frederick the Great have not yet succeeded in inventing any excuse for this step. Nine generals, thirty-five squadrons, eighteen battalions, sixty-six cannon and innumerable flags were lost. The enemy lost nothing, as they merely requested the valiant Prussians to be so good as to dismount from their horses. No one dared to interrupt the King in the composition of the 'Parody on the Preacher Solomon, in the manner of Voltaire,' in order to inform him that exactly what

the generals had prophesied, in opposition to the King's view, had occurred; he did not like contradiction. When the news finally filtered through to the King, it was revealed to him in a flash that the fatal moment had come when honour was lost, and therewith, as he so often proclaimed, the justification for continued existence. He exclaimed to his reader in despair: 'Honour, my friend, honour is a loss which cannot be calculated and can never be made good. Centuries are required to wipe out this loss and this stain'; and he proceeded to quote some beautiful and tragic verses of Racine. But as he guessed that his Prussians might be more indulgent on a point of honour than their perhaps too exacting King, the poison pills still remained unused. Instead of taking poison, Frederick gave on the following day a lively description of his plans for retiring into the ease and contentment of private life; he did not say whither, but perhaps, in view of his taste for unbridled jesting at religion, he may, like his more pious father in 1738, have been attracted to Holland as the land of tolerance, unless he had visions of his 'free' England or an English island, or had hopes that he would be allowed to reside somewhere in the Empire as the Marquis de Brandebourg. 'England seems made,' he had remarked shortly before (23, vii. 59) to de Catt, 'for the purpose of living there in peace and not making conquests, and indeed that is no misfortune.' In regard to the plans contemplated by Frederick the Great in 1759, at the time of his bitterest defeats, in place of the original intention of suicide, we find the following information in de Catt's diary (24, xi. 59), that is to say, four days after Maxen:

"During the few minutes that I was with him the King talked to me only of his plan of abdicating the throne. He had already spoken several times of this plan, but never in such detail as on this occasion. The King said: "If I am able some day to find my way out of this horrible confusion, then, my friend, I know very well how I should like to spend the remainder of the days allotted to me by fate. I should retain for myself one province, the annual revenues of which would have to amount to 100,000 taler. I should select for myself a few friends—honourable, enlightened and courteous, but no flatterers. I should do

everything in my power to keep away the ambitious and intriguing; also I should not go near a town, where royalty and obsequiousness can never quite be got rid of. I should establish it as an inviolable law that every one should be perfectly free, and in his actions and intercourse behave simply as my friend. And certainly I for my part should prove myself an affectionate, obliging and faithful friend. Every stranger, that is to say, if he were sociable, and endowed with intellect and feeling and some degree of reputation, should be received with open arms, but all those who were attracted only by foolish and impudent curiosity, should be studiously kept aloof. My meals would be very simple. Twelve thousand taler annually should suffice for my table, twenty thousand I would expend on my hobbies, and the remainder should be for my companions, who should also get something after my death, in order that they might sometimes remember me. Thus, my friend, I would strew with flowers the short path of life that remains for me to tread." Then he quoted a few verses from Chaulieu. He showed me the sketch of a house for himself and six friends, which he had drawn that morning. A small wing was to be built on for the reception of distinguished guests, in case they desired to stay with him a few days. The King concluded with the words: "Adieu, my friend, I want to go to bed. Think of me and of my fine plan of abdication. Good night!"

"Frederick's rash plans of suicide were forgotten, or only cropped up occasionally in the letters like a playful coquetry. De Catt's account of the following day is very characteristic (25 xi. 59): 'He read me his Solomon again. "Do you think my verses can be ranked with Voltaire's?" The little fly which still breathes is better than a dead lion; that is the verse that he likes best.' The king, therefore, saw no reason to use his opium pills, because there remained to him another and, as it seems to me, far more sensible hope than that of being forced to be merely a 'little fly.' In 1760 he had taken up his quarters in the Liegnitz madhouse; and he wrote to de Catt (115): 'I foresee that, if this is to go on, at the end of the campaign they will lock me up in the Liegnitz madhouse, where you saw me quartered.' Either the madhouse appealed to him, or he

wished to give proof even there of his royal spirit of endurance and sacrifice ? ”

Manfred smiled for a moment, and then continued very seriously :

### FREDERICK'S DELIVERY BY TSAR PETER

“ Then came the last phase of the great King's ‘ heroic endurance.’ He was entrapped, and his all too virile female adversaries for a long time disdained his humble offers of peace.”

Hereupon Manfred turned over the leaves of the *Fragments* by *Baron von Zimmermann*, the third volume of which lay on the table, and at once exclaimed, as though delighted at a discovery : “ Here Frederick's doctor gives an account of the memorable days which followed.” Manfred read aloud : “ ‘ It is said that the King came to Breslau in the winter of 1761-2, in order there to await his end. He abandoned himself entirely to his grief . . . All were despondent, because they believed that Frederick was despondent. In fact the monarch showed himself to no one. He did not once see either his bodyguard or the parade, and, what is more, he no longer played his flute. . . . He appeared however, to have received news that the Empress Elizabeth was on the point of death, for he had given orders that a strict watch should be kept at the Oderthor, and that, if a Russian courier arrived, he was not to be detained a moment ; even at night the key was to be left there.’ ”

“ And the Russian courier came, and brought the ardently desired and joyful news : that Frederick II. was indeed a great and steadfast king. Frederick had in fact, though involuntarily, held out better than the less manly empress of Russia, who had weakened and died. Frederick, who had but now been sitting in his trap and begging for peace, was now able to make a glorious exit.”

Hegemann : “ You seem to imply that the death of the Russian Empress saved the great King. What really saved him was the deep admiration which the new Tsar felt for the King of Prussia. Is it not remarkably gratifying to the people of Prussia to know that their great King in his supreme need was

saved, not by superior military strength or by an accident of war, but by a marvellous moral victory ? Nothing can detract from this triumph of Frederick's genius over the soul of the Muscovite ! ”

Manfred : “ Nothing, to be sure. Unless you take exception to the fact that this ‘ Muscovite,’ who was of Holstein origin, was half-crazy, and that therefore his admiration for Frederick II. does not seem particularly flattering. The new Russian Tsar, Peter III., would appear from every indication to have been a poor imbecile, who conceived an admiration for Frederick II. as a kindred spirit, and in any case became madly infatuated with him. Frederick used to refer to him in his writings only as ‘ *le divin empereur* ’.” (116)

Manfred reached out his hand to the next bookshelf for a handsome volume published by the Insel-Verlag, and continued : “ Peter's consort, the great Catherine, relates in her memoirs : ‘ Since his childhood the Grand-Duke (Peter III.) had cherished a special fondness for the King of Prussia . . . which later degenerated into downright madness. . . . He learnt with regret of the victory of the Russian army (at Grossjägerndorf) over the Prussian troops, which he had looked upon as invincible.’ Count Poniatowski, afterwards King of Poland, jested in his *Memoirs* at Peter III.'s Prussian infatuation as follows : ‘ It seems as though Peter's nurse and his tutors must have been specially devoted to the King of Prussia. For from his childhood he cherished such a strong and at the same time such a ridiculous feeling of veneration and love for this prince, that the King of Prussia himself once said of this passion (for it was indeed a passion) : “ I am his Dulcinea ; he has never seen me and has fallen in love with me as Don Quixote did with Dulcinea ”.’ It is distressing to find the King of Prussia poking fun so ungratefully at Peter III., his ‘ divine emperor ’ and the great deliverer of Prussia, for, even supposing that he was a foolish blockhead, how does the infatuation of the Prussian historians for Frederick differ from the infatuation of Peter III. ? They are like faithful dogs, from whose understanding the true nature of their idolised master remains hidden, but who are determined to do their utmost to save him from the contempt of mankind ! ”

Hegemann: "For that matter the Seven Years' War was far from having been won forthwith as the result of the temporary alliance of the Russians. Both before and after the assassination of Peter III., Frederick the Great had to furnish further signal proof of his genius as a diplomat and a general, before Prussia was finally recognised as a great power."

"'Manfred: A diplomat and a general!'—That will perhaps sound to you like a mockery, when you hear the account of the Russian events of that time, as given by that faithful Prussian professor, Kurd von Schlözer. You have already heard Lucchesini's account of the remarkable tact with which Frederick the Great ordered the flogging of Professor Gross, thus ingratiating himself with his brother, the Russian Ambassador. You will not therefore be surprised that Frederick's admirer, de Catt, on September 5, 1759, commits to his diary the following account of a discussion with the diplomatic King: 'Gross, the Russian ambassador in Berlin, was largely responsible for the breach. The King could not endure him. He gave a banquet, to which he invited all the ministers, with the exception of the Russian.' The crafty Frederick was at that time specially counting upon the alliance with Russia."

Manfred turned over the pages of Schlözer's *Frederick the Great and Catherine the Second*, in which he had underlined various passages and continued:

"After the 'almost blind confidence' which the previous Russian Empress, Elizabeth, had originally felt towards Frederick II. had given place to loathing, as a result of Frederick's amazing tactlessness, the envoys bringing to Russia Frederick's clumsy appeals for peace were simply thrown into prison. The new Tsar, Peter, however, suddenly refused to receive the messengers from his own allies, Austria and France. 'On the other hand, there was now not a single court festival, not a single intimate social gathering, to which Goltz (Frederick's new ambassador) was not regularly invited.' Even an ambassador of Frederick can succeed. Frederick II. had in fact at the court of the Tsar Peter an ambassador with whom he was really satisfied, whom he therefore looked upon as something more than a 'postman.' The Russian Emperor always referred



to Frederick as 'The King, my lord.' That the latter appointed him captain he accounted the greatest honour. The typical Prussian reserve officer! Schlözer goes on to relate:

"The conversation was concerned mainly with the King's affairs. . . . 'There is not a single regiment of the Prussian army of which the Emperor could not name the last three or four commanders,' Goltz reports to Frederick. . . . The elevation to the rank of Prussian Lieutenant-General filled the heart of the Tsar with joyful emotion, and the Saxon ambassador wrote, not without resentment: 'The King of Prussia is the Emperor of Russia.'—'The prudence and tact of the Prussian ambassador won for the clever young diplomat the most flattering appreciation from his sovereign.' The Tsar Peter III. copied his adored Frederick as closely as possible, except that, in place of worshipping everything French, as did the King of Prussia, he worshipped everything Prussian with an equal degree of infatuation. It was a victory of the Prussian spirit in the East. Peter's 'preference of his German bodyguard over the Russian Guards, his scornful disdain for Russian customs and the national church, his almost childish imitation of Prussian institutions, and especially the brutal treatment of his consort. . . .' These things are related of Russia by Professor von Schlözer, but they are all applicable to Prussia; they were all practised by the King of Prussia and were part of his 'greatness'—except that in his case the preference was for French and not for Prussian institutions. Peter III. was even desirous of imitating Frederick's Silesian wars. Schlözer reports further: 'Now an adventurous campaign was to be undertaken, in order to assert ancient claims upon the Schleswig possessions, for the acquisition of which no one felt the faintest desire. The day was already fixed for the departure of the Guards; Peter was resolved to direct the operations in person.' And Frederick the Great proposed, as we know, to assist the Tsar in this Russian conquest of the German territory of Schleswig-Holstein.

"But the Russians were not quite so servile as the Prussians. Peter's 'brutally treated consort' was not—as Frederick II. declared his own to be—an 'old cow.' At all events, the

Prussian ambassador on whom Frederick II. bestowed such flattering praise wrote to his sovereign : ' I must inform you, Sire, under the seal of strictest confidence, that, in view of the policy of the Russian court, I need not concern myself very much about relations with the Empress.' The 'cautious' Prussian ambassador, whose shrewdness was equal to that of his sovereign, therefore stuck the more closely to the Emperor, and together with the Emperor and his anti-Russian household at Oranienbaum (his Sanssouci)—was taken prisoner by the great Catherine, after an attempt to escape in the company of the Emperor. His position as ambassador saved him his life ; but he asked his great king to recall him, since—as he wrote himself—' the estrangement of those with whom I formerly associated makes it quite impossible for me to re-establish relations.' This was a few weeks after his ' master-strokes ' had been admired by Frederick II. with the words : '*Vos coups d'essay, mon cher, sont des coups de maître.*' Frederick was then obliged to look about for less masterly ambassadors to Russia, and in course of time hit upon Goethe's rival, the Weimar royal tutor, Count Goertz.

"The Russians were not, like the Prussians, prepared to submit to their ruler's mania for all things foreign. To be sure, Catherine also was of foreign origin, having been before her marriage Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst. But she was not, like Frederick II. and his admirer, Peter III., blind to the foundations of real power. Already in the year 1755, the English ambassador Williams wrote of the successes of the young German Princess at St. Petersburg : ' Since her coming into this country, she has by every method in her power endeavoured to gain the affections of this nation. She applied herself with diligence to study their language and speaks it at present (so the Russians tell me) in the greatest perfection.' Frederick II. boasted that he spoke German like a coachman. A king must surely have no more intelligence than a coachman, if he never learns to speak the language of his people better than a coachman. Or do the Prussian historians propose here again to twist a saying of Goethe's, and maintain that the Russian language was 'already more developed' than the German, and that the latter could not yet satisfy a man of 'such high

literary culture' as Frederick. These Prussian historians are only too anxious to belittle the Germans, in order to do honour to their romantic king.

"Catherine too was a pupil of Voltaire, but a more intelligent one than Frederick II. She realised that one can rule a nation without despising it. When she got rid of her Prussia-loving consort—Schlözer here becomes positively lyrical—'she galloped on a piebald grey and white stallion down to her Guards. She wore the uniform of the Preobraschensk regiment—not the new uniform copied from the Prussian, which her consort had recently adopted to the indignation of the whole army, but the old, famous uniform introduced by Peter the Great. On her breast glittered the Order of St. Andrew.' And Prussian historians contend for the order *pour le mérite*, which was bestowed on that muddlehead, Carlyle, for his eulogy of the francophile king. By the side of Catherine, does not Frederick II., when one recalls his *commis rats de cave, jaugeurs, visiteurs, contrôleurs, anticontribandiers, etc. etc. etc.*, appear like another Peter III., like a person suffering from arrested mental development ?

"Catherine learnt Russian. The English ambassador wrote further of Catherine in 1755 : 'She has also succeeded in her other aim, for she is esteemed and beloved here to a high degree. . . . She has a great knowledge of this Empire and makes it her only study. . . . As to the Great Duke (afterwards Tsar Peter III.) . . . his confidence in the Great Duchess is so great that sometimes he tells people that, though he does not understand things himself, yet his wife understands everything.' Frederick II. was perhaps not wiser but certainly less gallant than Peter III., and it is a crying pity that history has withheld from us the spectacle that Frederick II. would have afforded if a great woman like Catherine had had him under her thumb. As King of Prussia the Russian Empress put up with him, because she realised at once that he would be useful in the struggle against the dangerous German Empire. If Catherine had become Frederick's wife, we should have had a more amusing situation, or perhaps a royal martyr ?" Manfred began laughingly to paint the picture of a henpecked

Frederick. I interrupted him : " Peter III. was not a general like Frederick the Great, who, after the death of Peter, was to furnish further striking proof of his military genius before he won the Seven Years' War."

FREDERICK II. AS A GENERAL AND AS  
" EXHAUSTION-STRATEGIST "

Manfred : " Frederick II. very wisely furnished hardly any more proofs of his military genius after the saving intervention of the Muscovites. So much he does seem to have learnt from the great humiliation of the period following Kunersdorf and Maxen. Even after the joyful news had finally arrived from Russia, he did not immediately recover that careless irresponsibility with which he had formerly so often 'sacrificed his splendid army to no purpose at all,' to quote Goethe's words which were endorsed by Napoleon. Prince Henry said of his royal brother : 'My brother always wanted to join battle : that was the whole extent of his military science.' And the loyal professor Hans Delbrück, in one of his accesses of criticism, remarks : 'Let us consider with Prince Henry what Frederick did in fact gain by his battles. He himself seems finally to have admitted the justice of his brother's criticism . . . in so far as, during the last two years of the great war . . . he did not fight another battle, . . . although the support of the Russians gave him for a time the superiority in respect of numbers'."

Thomas Mann : " You underestimate the importance of the Frederician spirit of attack, which was quite contrary to the taste of the age and bordered on the barbaric. Frederick despised the 'refined' military science of his age. He also despised the entrenched position, which was so highly esteemed elsewhere. Force the enemy to give battle ! Attack ! Attack ! *Attaquez donc toujours !* "

Manfred warned him laughingly : " Take care ! You are bringing confusion into the ranks of those who make it their duty to safeguard the memory of Frederick II. You say : ' Frederick despised the refined military science of his age.' Frederick's admirers who occupy Prussian professorial chairs are

almost unanimous in asserting the contrary, and prefer to explain Frederick's military shortcomings as the faults of a great conservative, who apologises if he ever deviates from the canonical teachings of military science, and who looks upon the great Condé and the great Turenne as the supreme exemplars of military genius." (117)

Thomas Mann: "Frederick wanted a battle at any price. He said: 'Battles are necessary in order to decide a conflict'."

Manfred: "The official admirers of his military science prefer to quote the following utterance, in which Frederick expresses quite a different view: 'There are undoubtedly situations in which one is compelled to fight, but one should only engage when the enemy, be he in camp or be he on the march, is unprepared, or when he can, by a decisive blow, be forced to make peace. There is no doubt that most generals, who readily engage in a battle, only employ this expedient, because they cannot think of any other. Far from being imputed to them as a merit, it ought rather to be deemed a proof of their lack of genius'."

Thomas Mann: "Let me remind you of Torgau, where Frederick refuted all this."

Manfred: "Frederick apologised for Torgau in his *Memoirs*. And he had reason to do so, for it was a most dearly purchased victory, a sham victory, which achieved nothing, as Hans Delbrück points out. The Austrians only retreated a distance of three days' march and retained possession of Dresden, which Frederick had intended to recover by the battle at Torgau. If Delbrück is right, Torgau was one of those bloody, profitless victories, for which Frederick blames Charles XII. of Sweden, and calls him a 'terrible clown.' They are really no laughing matter, these Frederician victories. At Torgau Frederick's loss was estimated at 14-20,000 men. 'It would cost him his head if the figure were known,' he said to the bastard, Anhalt, who brought him the figures. At Sedan, where the victory was not 'only moderate' (as Delbrück says of the victory of Torgau) Moltke lost 3000 killed, and there were 6000 wounded, although in 1870 the weapons were much more terrible and the armies larger.

"Any one who deems this a reason for doubting Frederick's genius will be referred by his idolaters with an air of portentous mystery to the great King's fortitude in 'holding on,' which is attributed not to Frederick's superior army and the death of the Empress of Russia, but to Frederick's genius and the indestructible force of Frederician Prussia. As though it were not much rather Frederick's opponents who 'held on,' and refused his humble offers of peace! And as though it had not been made perfectly clear, and in fact asserted again and again by Frederick himself, that the powerful enemies of Germany, then as ever, tolerated—or rather welcomed and encouraged—the continued existence of an anti-imperial Prussia, because thereby the Central European German Empire was rendered powerless and politically ineffective.

"Is not the alleged 'victory of Frederician genius over the hostile world,' above all in respect of military achievement, a misleading interpretation of events? At the stage which the development of military science had then reached, a small and united army under efficient leadership was at a very considerable advantage as compared with large and ill-disciplined armies under divided leadership, just as a sharpshooter with a good gun and sufficient cartridges is at an advantage as compared with a number of disunited adversaries with stacks of guns? The great Turenne, who was emulated by Frederick II., had no use for more than 30,000 men, and in the time of Frederick II. the military dogma still held good: 'An army of 40,000 to 50,000 determined and well-disciplined men can attempt anything; it can, so to speak, without foolhardiness, set out to conquer the whole world. Anything in excess of this figure is merely superfluous and creates trouble and confusion.' Yet the fact that Frederick II. on various occasions defeated a large army with a small army is taken not as a matter of course, but as evidence of superlative military genius! Frederick II. and his people sacrificed the spiritual life of the Prussian nation to the ambition of creating an army, with which a great general and statesman might conquer the whole world. This whole world the English were stuffing into their pockets, while Frederick II. could not even conquer Saxony. The conquest of Saxony is

now declared by many of his most faithful admirers to have been the true and admirable purpose of the 'third Silesian war of defence'."

Hegemann: "On a previous occasion, you expressed the view that it was not owing to his superior genius, but to his superior army and good luck that Frederick the Great was victorious. . . ."

Manfred: "...victorious only in about half the battles that he fought in his wars, and this only if you include the victories of the English army under Ferdinand of Brunswick. I mean that, in accordance with the law of probabilities, Frederick's superior army under tolerable leadership might have been expected to win more than fifty victories out of a hundred."

Hegemann: "Is not your view of the superiority of the Frederician army refuted by Napoleon's remark after the Battle of Jena? Did not Napoleon say: 'I have only conquered the army of Frederick the Great, but not his spirit'?"

Manfred: "Even Napoleon was occasionally very polite.<sup>1</sup> But the German is not lying when he politely contradicts him. Or is it Frederick's superior generalship that is testified to in the following admissions made by the great King's admirer, Hans Delbrück, in his attempt to save Frederick's honour:

"In regard to Frederick's victory at Mollwitz, Delbrück says: 'There was left open to Frederick, as he himself afterwards wrote to Leopold of Dessau, "no other course" save to attack the enemy.' In respect of infantry the Prussians had an almost twofold superiority (18,000 as compared with 9800), in respect of artillery an almost threefold superiority (53 cannon as against 19); their cavalry, however, was much weaker (4600 as against 6800). In consequence of this superiority in respect of cavalry, the issue of the Battle of Mollwitz remained for a long time very doubtful. The Austrian cavalry had swept the Prussian off the field, and 'old officers,' as Frederick wrote in his *Memoirs*, 'saw the moment approaching when this corps would have to surrender for lack of ammunition.' In order at

<sup>1</sup> Manfred on one occasion discussed in detail Napoleon's opinion of Frederick II.'s generalship. This conversation is published separately under the title: "Napoleon, or 'prostration before the hero'."

least to save the person of the King, Field-Marshal Schwerin persuaded him to abandon the field, and to endeavour, by making a *détour* round the Austrian forces, to reach the Prussian troops, which were occupying a position further to the north in Silesia. When however the King, who was evidently in a state of high agitation, had been got out of the way, Schwerin succeeded in effecting another advance of the infantry and artillery, and the Austrians were forced to give way before their incessant firing.' Or listen to Delbruck on the Frederician victories of the Seven Years' War: 'Frederick could, at the end of July, 1756, when the political situation was ripe, have invaded Bohemia with an overwhelming superiority, and it is difficult to see how, before he reached Vienna, the Austrians could have offered any resistance for which he would not have been more than a match.' . . . 'Here the right principle would have been: "short, vigorous attacks, and then a prompt and advantageous peace" (as happened 110 years later). Frederick, however, thought otherwise. His insistence that Prussia's wars should be short and vigorous is not to be understood in the modern sense . . .' That is to say, this insistence of the literary King was, like so much else in him, only ill-digested literature. He boasted: 'Our troops are so mobile and agile . . . with such troops one could subdue the whole world,' and in 1744, in order to save Alsace for the French, he drafted the plan of 'a campaign to the Danube; by a march to Vienna, Frederick proposed, in the second year of the war, to set his foot on the throat of the adversary.' (118) But no matter how 'agile' his troops, and no matter whether his wars lasted two years or seven years, he never set his foot either towards Vienna or on the throat of the enemy. He made the plans of an Alexander, Napoleon or Moltke, but he remained always and only—Frederick II.

"Professor Delbrück, in his attempt to vindicate the honour of the poetry-writing, shilly-shallying king, makes the following further admissions: 'At Lobositz, the Prussians, as the result of an unsuccessful cavalry attack undertaken contrary to the King's command, were really beaten, and the King had already left the field, when he was fetched back, because the Prussians had, after a severe struggle, wrested from the Austrian light



troops an advance position which the Prussian generals took to be the Austrian main position, and the battle was now thought to be won. This was not the case however. The main position of the Austrians had hardly been touched, and their army was quite equal to the Prussian, but the success finally remained with the Prussians, because Browne did not recognise his advantage and did not continue the battle.' . . . 'Frederick himself, in one of his subsequent writings, attributed the failure of his plan for the campaign of 1757 to the fact "that the battle of Prague, won solely by the troops, flung the whole army of Prince Karl onto Prague, and so made the siege of this city impossible." . . . Frederick had . . . thought it necessary to make excuses for his attack at Kolin; . . . the battle of Kolin was not lost by reason of any single error, but because, as we see things to-day, it was from the outset quite impossible that it should be won. Daun had 54,000 men, as against 33,000, in so advantageous a position that it was not only difficult to get at them, but also every movement of the attacking army could be seen from a long distance. . . . Frederick's own view that he only needed another four battalions in order to win the day must be deemed a self-deception and rejected as such. . . . Prague, Kolin, Rossbach, Leuthen . . . victories alternating with defeats, the surmounting of which deserves even higher praise than the victories. There can be no doubt that the expectation of taking prisoner the whole Austrian army in Prague was exaggerated, and that the attack at Kolin on an Austrian army of twofold strength and in an exceptionally favourable position was an act of foolhardiness. If Frederick had not fought the battle of Prague, and again the battles of Kolin, Zorndorf and Kunersdorf, he would have been able to continue the war with greater ease and success. . . . It is a fact that these battles could have been avoided; that they were dictated not by any intrinsic practical necessity, but by the personal judgment and subjectivity of the commander-in-chief. At Kunersdorf, as Clausewitz expresses it, Frederick "fell into the snare of his own system of oblique battle-formation." . . . The King has often been reproached, in particular by Napoleon, for not employing greater strength at Kunersdorf. . . . It may

be said that the true and basic problem of the Seven Years' War is : How was it possible that Frederick surmounted the defeat of Kunersdorf ?' (Frederick's loss at Kunersdorf is estimated by Delbrück at '19,000 men and the artillery.') In answer to this question Delbrück suggests two reasons : 'The enemy were not agreed among themselves. 'Experience teaches us that it is very difficult to secure satisfactory cooperation among allies.' And : 'At Kunersdorf it was not the whole but only half of the Prussian army that was beaten.' That was just what Napoleon objected to. It seemed to him incomprehensible that Frederick had not ventured to risk the two halves of his army and to make a combined attack, instead of allowing himself to be defeated.

"The accounts of the military superiority of Frederick the Great are rather reminiscent of Achim von Arnim's account of the mad soldier, who with his one good cannon kept a peaceful town for a long time in a state of terror, or of the story of the negro of Savannah, who got hold of a loaded gun, with which he held up a street of the city until he made himself drunk. If Frederick II. had not written poetry, and if he had been a general, instead of practising a 'strategy of exhaustion,' he would have been able to achieve all kinds of marvellous feats with his unique army, which had, by merciless application of the rod, been raised to a pitch of supreme perfection. We know from Frederick's youthful letters how he laughed at Prince Eugene, when the latter, astonished at the exploits of the Prussian auxiliary troop, had the imperial troops drilled in the Prussian fashion. Goethe says, when he is describing his stay at Strassburg : 'Frederick's preeminence in everything was strikingly instanced when the Prussian drill and even the Prussian stick were introduced into the French army.' The expressions of stupefied admiration contained as early as 1741 in Marshal Belle-Isle's reports to Versailles regarding the troops of Frederick II. sound like the horror of the master-tailor in *Egmont* : 'These fellows are like machines with the devil inside them.' We know from Frederick's own words, as reported by Lucchesini, that, of all the generals of his time, the King was at most prepared to rank the Marshal of Saxony on a level with himself. This solitary rival—also a German—

was, however, fighting on the same side as Frederick—that is to say, on the side of the French. Is it possible to conceive anything more ridiculous than the correspondence exchanged in bad French between these two Germans, the greatest marshals of the rococo, with the purpose of helping each other to safeguard the interests of their master, the King of France, against the ‘tyranny’ of Maria Theresa? In 1745 the French Marshal of Saxony wrote to the Prussian *Federic*: ‘The manner in which Your Majesty’s army is organised and drilled must ensure you the victory.’ It was not only Maurice of Saxony who overlooked that, under a poetry-writing Frederick, even the most superior army was liable to be defeated. After the ‘victory’ of Mollwitz, the ambassadors of France and England competed with one another in the endeavour to secure the services of this army, and dispersed any doubts that may have troubled its leader that, in spite of his flight from the battle, he was a great general. In the report of the French ambassador we find Frederick explaining the way to win a battle. Here again he is quite the poet!”

During Manfred’s last remarks, Mrs. Ellis had entered the room in the company of Dr. Martin Hobohm.<sup>1</sup>

After the conversation had drifted on to general topics for a time, the subject of Frederick II. was started once more, and Dr. Hobohm maintained, as he still does, the superiority of Frederick the Great as a general, and Manfred, who seemed to be amazingly well-informed even on this fairly technical subject, expressed strong doubts. A discussion developed, of which my memory has retained only a few passages, and those mostly Manfred’s contributions.

Manfred jested at the very decisive rôle which Seydlitz is known to have played in the victories of Rossbach and Zorndorf, and at the remarkable transformation of a Frederician victory into a defeat, when Seydlitz was wounded at Kunersdorf and

<sup>1</sup> Professor Hobohm is the Berlin historian, who made himself famous not only by his great work on Machiavelli, but also by his energetic defence of Hans Delbrück and his much-disputed vindication of Frederician strategy. A good deal later, after the abdication of the Hohenzollerns, Dr. Hobohm expressed his disapproval of the merciless exposures of the weaknesses of Frederick the Great.

rendered insensible. Manfred afterwards read the remarkable sentences with which de Catt on October 21, 1758, concludes a description of Frederick's defeat at Hochkirch :

"General Seydlitz asks that the King should allow his needlessly sacrificed infantry to retreat. "But," answered the King, "if I let them retreat, I shall lose the battle." "Very well," retorts Seydlitz, "I hope Your Majesty will win it"; and he sets spurs to his horse and returns to the cavalry'."

Manfred also spoke of the surprising revelations contained in the supplements to the *Militär-Wochenblatt* of 1882 and 1884, according to which 'Frederick's famous plan of a concentric offensive against Bohemia was drafted by General Winterfeldt, while the King's own plan was characterised by great dissipation of forces, absence of all spirit of initiative, and an extraordinary and almost baffling complexity.'

Dr. Hobohm declared that "the much-criticised strategic errors of Frederick II. were seen, on closer examination, to bear witness to superior military genius, and that they were all explicable by the great King's peculiar military tactics, which were first properly expounded by Hans Delbrück. It was part of the essence of these tactics—the so-called 'exhaustion strategy'—frequently to refuse battle, and to rely instead upon skilful manœuvring. In this 'exhaustion strategy' Frederick II. was a past master."

Manfred was quite undismayed. He reached for a book (it was Delbrück's work *On the Differences in the Strategy of Frederick and Napoleon*), and read the following passage: 'In this way, in the year 1744, the Austrian field-marshal, Traun, manœuvred Frederick the Great out of Bohemia without, so to speak, firing a shot, and yet with very great loss to the Prussians through fatigue, privation and desertion.' The same may be said of the 'Potato War' of 1778-79, in which Loudon and Joseph II. manœuvred the King of Prussia and his brother Henry out of Bohemia, and the Prussians sustained losses through desertion and disease which are estimated at 25,000 men and 10,000 horses. (119)

Soon after, Manfred again turned to Thomas Mann.

Manfred: "In fact, if you attribute to the great Frederick

the theories contained in the present-day regulations for field-service, you wantonly undermine the foundations of the temple so carefully constructed in honour of Frederick's enigmatic military science. You are perhaps unaware that, in considering the military activities of Frederick the Great, ardent disciples of Napoleon and Moltke are so inevitably reminded of the bungling of some ignoramus that finally the Berlin University professor, Hans Delbrück, undertook to invent, in the seclusion of his study and for purely literary purposes, an entirely new military science. The essence of this new science consists in the fact that, applied retrospectively, it exhibits Frederick as a great general, even where his conduct was contrary to all present-day notions of good generalship. In the service of the Prussian cause Herr von Delbrück has invented a magic phrase: the so-called 'strategy of exhaustion.' This phrase contains a double meaning. That is to say, the principles of the 'strategy of exhaustion' allow the King not only to exhaust his adversaries, but also to exhaust himself, only of course in the interests of his military science. Delbrück also calls this 'bi-polar strategy.' Frederick II. is of course to be hailed as convincing proof of the blessing of absolute sovereignty.

"In addition, however, his generalship is, under the banner of this 'strategy of exhaustion,' to be allowed the benefit of all those alleviating circumstances which may be justly pleaded by ordinary generals, who not only lack absolute authority but sometimes even support within their own camp. Not only Prince Eugene and other contemporary generals are compared with Frederick II. by his defenders, but even the long-deceased Pericles, in fact all those whose amazing genius was thwarted in the achievement of victory by the fact that they had first to secure the permission and the means for victory and to defend themselves against a throng of envious rivals in their own country. In the case of these men the smallest error of political judgment or of military tactics would often have sufficed to bring down upon them the fate of Themistocles, Aristides or Alcibiades. A tactical error on the part of the English admiral, Byng, at the beginning of the war in which Frederick II. fought for the English, resulted in the execution of Byng in London.

Frederick II., who approved of this execution, of which Pitt disapproved, in the following year on account of a similar error brought about the disgrace and death of his own brother, August Wilhelm. Frederick II. who was guilty of countless similar and worse errors, always had, as an absolute sovereign, the opportunity—as Goethe said of him—‘to make good very skilfully the errors which he frequently committed.’ He could therefore venture to be an ‘exhaustion strategist.’ Instead of having to dare and achieve great things like Alexander, Napoleon or Moltke, he could delay as much as he pleased, or risk the most irresponsible ventures, with or without success, at the will of chance, which Frederick himself declared to be the supreme arbiter of battles.

“Recent estimates of Frederick’s military science contain an extraordinary number of attempts to explain either why Frederick II. neglected to fight when he could thereby have gained an advantage and when according to present-day notions he ought to have fought, or why he often fought with an insufficient strength and so, in what appears a quite incomprehensible and irresponsible fashion, sacrificed his fine army on the shambles of bloody defeats or mock victories; in fact, as Goethe justly remarked: ‘sacrificed his splendid army quite uselessly.’ Not to fight, or to fight at the wrong time and with insufficient forces—these are the two hidden poles of the ‘bi-polar’ Frederician strategy of exhaustion.” Later, Manfred asked Professor Hobohm:

“What had happened to Frederick’s ‘exhaustion strategy,’ when he ‘sacrificed his splendid army quite uselessly,’ and when he fought such senseless battles as the victories and defeats of Prague, Kolin, Zorndorf and Kunersdorf cannot but appear even to his admirers?”

Here Dr. Hobohm made an admission that was probably very important, though to a layman like myself it seemed to involve a flagrant contradiction. He said: “Delbrück often laid stress on the fact that the strategy of exhaustion treats engagements and manœuvres as equally valuable military expedients. I go still further, and herein lies a long-standing difference of opinion between Delbrück and myself. Delbrück considers

that the strategy of exhaustion, of which Frederick proved himself a master, differs from the 'strategy of overthrow' of Napoleon and Moltke in respect of the method of warfare. I, on the contrary, believe that the difference is not one of method but of aim. It is the aim of a military operation that determines its character, and establishes the general directing it as an 'exhaustion strategist' or an 'overthrow strategist'."

Manfred Ellis was about to bring back the discussion once more to Frederick's unfulfilled project of a march upon Vienna, when Mrs. Ellis intervened. As a rule, she listened in silence to these discussions, but now she turned to Martin Hobohm and remarked sympathetically: "Go one step further, Professor, and you will resolve all the apparent contradictions. Not the method, you say, but the aim? If you said: Not the aim (which, after all, must always be modified by the results) but the result, then even my untutored intelligence would understand you. Yes, I can see this much: a general who overthrows his adversary is an 'overthrow strategist' and a general who only tires out his adversary is an 'exhaustion strategist'."

This did in fact seem clear, but Mrs. Ellis laughed suddenly, and there was something infectious in her laughter. It infected so many of those present that it almost seemed as though the theories of Delbrück and Hobohm were being extinguished in this laughter.

Mrs. Ellis deprived this little interlude of any element of painfulness by the manner in which she asked Professor Hobohm: "If you stood towards Frederick the Great in the position not of a grateful Prussian, but of a foreigner like myself, how would you judge his achievements as a general?"

Professor Hobohm answered after a moment's reflection: "I should make myself clear that in view of all the political and military circumstances of the time, an attitude of defence would be advantageous. But a power intent on aggrandisement would not be hampered, but rather assisted, by the tactical superiority of defence over attack. A sudden invasion of a neighbouring enemy province, or any other swift strategic move, is no very difficult matter even under these circumstances if it is well and secretly prepared. If the other

side then proceed to defend themselves against the insolent disturber of the peace, the attacker becomes the defender and has the advantage in respect of strategic conditions. Even a coalition of considerably greater strength has difficulty in attacking him. If he is a Frederick, he will achieve his end, if not in a single war, at least in two or three."

"Yes, Frederick needed three," answered Manfred, who did not seem to have anything to object against this cautious estimate of the achievements of Frederick the Great as a general. On the contrary, he asked eagerly :

"Do I understand you rightly ? Do you think, as I myself do, that Frederick II. embarked on the Seven Years' War only for the purpose of defending the stolen Silesian territory ? And if you diagnose 'exhaustion strategy' not by the choice of the means but by the choice of the aim, then everything depends on the much-disputed question, what was Frederick's aim when he took the field for the third time against Maria Theresa ? And on the further question : Did Frederick attain his aim ?"

Professor Hobohm admitted, however, that he shared the view of Professor Max Lehmann, of Gottingen, and of Professor Hans Delbrück, of Berlin, that Frederick II. engaged in the Seven Years' War with the aim not merely of defending the occupied province of Silesia, but also of conquering Saxony, in accordance with the detailed plan in his testament of 1752, that same testament on the cover of which Bismarck, as we now know (120), wrote the injunction, which until 1918 was strictly observed "To be kept permanently secret !" Of the fact that Bismarck was no indiscriminating admirer of Frederick Manfred had already adduced striking proof.

Dr. Hobohm continued : "If Frederick II.'s only aim in the Seven Years' War was the defence of Silesia, and not the conquest of Saxony, then—the following is a quotation from Hans Delbrück's *Origin of the Seven Years' War*—'Frederick cannot but appear a weak and sanguine bungler, who at the first hint of a remote danger adopts measures, comes to a standstill, turns in a direction where he excites agitation and alarm without any real advantage, remains armed when there is no longer anything to be gained by it, thereby provokes fresh irritation, and yet only



decides actually to strike a blow when the most favourable opportunity is already lost, and by an offensive, which brings little profit to himself, does exactly what his enemies are wanting him to do, and removes the last obstacles to their union'."

Manfred: "There Hans Delbrück seems to me to have sketched an excellent picture of the true Frederick! And does Delbrück imagine that, by assuming that Frederick intended to conquer Saxony, he can save the political and military honour of the great King? In that case Frederick II. stands or falls with the plan for a permanent conquest of occupied Saxony?"

Dr. Hobohm: "Delbrück believes in this plan, and therefore regarded Frederick not as weak but as infinitely cunning, 'an image of towering and terrible greatness: the statesman, who, with the lawless temerity of genius, shatters in pieces the world which dares oppose him, is himself prepared to build a new world, and by profoundly mysterious ways advances straight towards his goal'."

Manfred: "Thus the conquest of Saxony was the aim of Frederick II.'s 'exhaustion strategy'? If he had attained this goal, would he perhaps really have been a great man?"

## FREDERICK II. AS THE FATHER OF GERMAN ROMANTICISM AND THE WARS OF LIBERATION?

Manfred winked mischievously, and then continued in a serious tone:

"Instead of realising his plans of conquering Saxony, Frederick II. elaborated after 1757 a suicide-phraseology, which is possibly not quite without significance; in connection with this phraseology one might in fact propound the question whether Frederick II. did not perhaps exercise a far more important influence on the literature of the world and of Germany than has hitherto been assumed. Frederick wrote his suicidal letters and his 'Defence of Suicide' at about the same time that Rousseau wrote the suicidal letters of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*. It is not impossible, but it is improbable, that Frederick was influenced by Rousseau. It is true that Rousseau, in his *Confessions*, relates that Grimm and Saint-Lambert, with

whom he was at that time carrying on a heated correspondence, had both followed the French army to Westphalia. In view of the war-time censorship of correspondence and news, it is not impossible that some of Rousseau's letters may have fallen into the hands of Prussian Hussars. But is it not more probable that Rousseau had heard the sensational news of Frederick's plans of suicide, which were specially designed for circulation in France, and that he may perhaps have been influenced by them? If that were the case, then Frederick would suddenly become almost entitled to a place of honour in German literature; he would be, so to speak, the grandfather of Werther, whose suicide represents the logical conclusion of the ideas concerning the blissfulness of death expressed in Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*. Even in the event of the failure of this hope of investing the great King of Prussia with some of that literary significance which his admirers claim on his behalf, though in another sense, there still remains the consoling thought that this military hero, simultaneously with the prophet whom he so despised, exploited the subject of suicide for literary purposes, after the 'Cato' tragedies of Addison, Deschamps and Gottsched had lost their popularity.

"Perhaps, however, Frederick II. here displays an affinity not exclusively with western examples. Perhaps it is rather another proof of his intimate connection with the national life of ancient Germany as evidence of which I have already instanced to you his collection of German folk-songs and his patronage of the national art of gold-making. Who can fail to be reminded by Frederick's oft-repeated but unfulfilled threats of suicide of that delightful carnival play, 'The man who kills himself nine times and yet after the tenth time is still a live clown,' with which Gottfried Prehauser delighted the population of Vienna before Frederick II. ever came to the throne? In Vienna, which Goethe called 'the capital of our fatherland,' there pulsed—as in Paris but not in the enslaved city of Berlin—a genuine national life and an appreciation of farce, great and small. What might not Vienna have brought forth to the glory of the German stage, if this imperial city had not been stifled by her wealth, if she had not produced, instead

of a strictly national theatre, a supreme international music! International, as befitted the capital of the Roman Empire, with its many races and languages! This great German international music remained a sealed book to Frederick of Prussia. It is the more touching to find that his philosophic and moral notions reveal an unmistakable affinity with the Punch-and-Judy show, which, though less distinguished, was more in harmony with his disposition, as well as with the German national tragi-comedy.

"However that may be, there can be no question that Frederick the Great, fifteen years before the young Goethe, loudly admired the exploit of the Emperor Otho, and realised before Goethe that the stab with the polished dagger in the breast is more effective for literary than for political purposes. Since he was usually dependent on French models, it is worth pointing out that, by realising this fact, Frederick established himself above those gamblers tolerated, or even encouraged, at the court of Louis XIV., who, if they had bad luck at play, feared suicide so little that Lavissee, that trustworthy historian, reports four cases of suicide—real, not literary—among the nobility in one winter. It seems as though Louis XIV. had perceived here a welcome though gradual means of automatically ridding himself of the superfluous or refractory portion of his nobility. A few decades later a less patient democracy had recourse to the guillotine for this purpose, and did not even except crowned heads. It is moreover possible that the great Louis considered that it was sometimes advisable even for crowned heads to remove themselves. At any rate he asked one morning upon waking, after he had the night before gambled recklessly and lost millions: 'Am I still king?' And when he had for ten years sustained the conflict against the whole of Europe and was defeated, he said to his Field-Marshal Villars: 'I mean to die with you or conquer' and—thereby? or by Bolingbroke's great act of treachery?—brought victory back to his standards. The idea that a King may seek release in suicide from the joys and troubles of his life was repudiated at a moment of supreme need by a descendant of Louis XIV. Louis XVI., who had suffered worse trials than Louis XIV. or

Frederick II., once exclaimed with tears in his eyes to a minister whom he had to dismiss: 'How fortunate you are! If I could but relinquish my post as you can!' But he controlled himself, and later went even to his death without the quiver of an eyelash."

Manfred instanced further examples, a veritable dance of death, which provoked various contradictions. Then he continued:

"But not only as the singer of suicide, but perhaps also as the singer of freedom, Frederick II. is a forerunner of German romantic poetry. Frederick's adaptation of the phraseology of Brutus and Cato to Austro-German conditions, his summons to the wars of liberation against the 'tyranny of the House of Austria,' with which he cloaked his revolt against the German Emperor, are familiar to later generations as the phraseology of the Tell legend. The opinion that the Tell legend was an excellent subject for poetry had already been expressed by Rousseau—in his 'letter to d'Alembert on the drama'—before Goethe had planned the Tell epic, and before Schiller had been urged by Goethe to write his *William Tell*. There is no evidence that Frederick II. was influenced by Rousseau, although Rousseau wrote the letter to d'Alembert several years before the beginning of the Seven Years' War.

"Every friend of Germany will be desirous of finding something in justification of the much-disputed glory of the 'remarkable prince!' I therefore propose that Frederick the Great should be named the father of German romanticism. He often spoke of himself as the 'Don Quixote of the North,' and I can produce further and very surprising material in proof of his right to bear the glorious title which I have suggested. When Frederick in his later years talked of himself as a Moses, who sees from afar the promised land of German literature, but is never to tread it himself, this was of course merely hypocritical jesting, for Frederick had sufficiently proved that he had no desire either to tread the promised land or to lead the way to it.

"But why not say (if one wants to find some title to literary distinction for Frederick II.) that his rebellious fulminations

against the alleged tyranny of the Empress Maria Theresa have in them something of the romanticism of Schiller's *Robbers* and of the sturdy resentment of Schiller's *Tell* against the 'extortion and brutality of the ruler' ? No one who has any taste for romantic nonsense can fail to perceive the close relation between Prussia and Switzerland—the Switzerland of Schiller's *Tell* and the real Switzerland ! It is true that Schiller's Swiss was resolved to 'stand firmly and loyally by the Empire' ; but Switzerland, like Prussia, preferred a powerless to a powerful German Emperor. Both derived from Mazarin's Peace of Westphalia advantages in respect of their independence from the Emperor. Both often placed their soldiers at the service of the French or other foreign powers, and 'allowed their wars to be paid for with our blood.' Both refused to be 'slaves of Austria,' and rose up against the insolent arrogance of Austrian tyranny. It is true that Maria Theresa did not rob Frederick of any cherished Melchthal or 'pierce the pointed steel into his eyes' ; and although Frederick II. had fought valiantly for the ancient rights of little Holland to obstruct German trade on the Scheldt, the Saxons and the Poles (or Danzig and other small states whose neutrality had been violated by Frederick II.) could truthfully assert that the words of the wicked Gessler : 'This little nation is a stone in our path ; in one way or another it must be subdued,' would seem more credible on the lips of the Prussians than on those of the Austrians. And the complaint of the Swiss : 'the minions of the despot force their way into the inmost precincts of our houses,' suggests an allusion rather to Frederick's hated excise officers than to the servants of Maria Theresa. It even recalls the resentment with which Goethe wrote to Charles Augustus of the 'cunning and secret violence' of the King of Prussia, who forced the poet to undertake the 'unpleasant, hated and disgraceful task' of selecting a number of the Duke's subjects and delivering the men to the Prussian recruiting officers to be used for the struggle against the German Emperor.

"But it is of the nature of romanticism to revel in contradictions and inconsistencies, and the 'emancipated spirits' of Germany soon after the death of Frederick II. selected as their

headquarters the city that was the home of Prussian drill, where, owing to the intervention of Napoleon, even the Palais Prince Henri could be used for founding a German University. The romantics loved ruins. In Berlin after 1786 there was no longer any French whitewash to conceal the intellectual collapse of Prussia, which Frederick's quixotic enthusiasm for the French Roi-Soleil and his absolutism had brought about or accelerated—it would be unkind to speak here of Frederick's high treason to the German spirit. The romantics, however, soon discovered that the 'love of fatherland' and the 'Be one, one, one,' with which the Prussians, like Schiller's Swiss, had idealised their secession from the Emperor and their battle-cry of 'Away from Austria!' was really an invitation to follow the banner of the Empire. Before they decided to do this, however, Napoleon first completed the work of Frederick II., finally overthrew the German Emperor in 1806, and in 1807, in the Peace of Tilsit, realised as far as Prussia was concerned, approximately the conditions proposed by Frederick II., when he was planning, before the death of the Empress Elizabeth, to retire into private life. Austria summoned the Germans to the War of Liberation and inflicted on Napoleon at Aspern in 1809 the first defeat that he ever suffered. Karl Lamprecht writes in his *German History*: 'The German patriots looked with streaming eyes on old Austria, so rich in victory and honour. Prussia had failed; failed in the Peace of Basle, failed still more at Jena and Auerstadt, and Austria had remained the only hope. . . . Immense was the effect of the resistance of the Tyrolese, as far as the German tongue was heard. . . . The note of the Tyrolese revolt became the keynote also of the great years of the national liberation.' From 1792 to 1813 Austria was the home of German thought, and attracted to her service such Germans as Heinrich von Kleist. There were, however, few Prussians who would not, like Frederick II. and Schiller's Swiss, have refused, 'to reap honours beneath the Hapsburg standards,' and Napoleon humbled Austria as he had humbled Prussia. The political aspirations of the Germans had become so utterly objectless that the greatest German of all, the sovereign of the German language—which Frederick II. despised and which

alone had survived the collapse—declared them to be hopeless and even disastrous. Goethe said in 1809: 'Like the shipwrecked, we must cling to our plank, and abandon all thought of our lost chests and coffers.' But the true romantic delights in a lost hope, and even the most forlorn cause is a living thing in romantic literature. Frederick II., the Prussian national hero, again and again referred to himself as the 'Don Quixote of the North,' however gladly he would also have been a politician and a conqueror. The quixotic, the hopeless, is of the very essence of German romantic patriotism."

Here I interrupted Manfred, for I could not contain myself any longer: "Do you propose to belittle also the wars of liberation and to declare them purposeless?"

Manfred: "My intention was in fact merely to sing the praises of Frederick II. as the pioneer of German romanticism, and at the same time to explain to myself Goethe's repugnance to the wars of liberation. But you are right. These wars of liberation were not quite purposeless. They did not win for the Germans a German Empire, nor for the Prussians either political freedom at home or independence of Russia abroad; but they did at length secure for the Germans 'freedom of the back,' as it was called, that is to say—thanks to Field-Marshal von Gneisenau and Baron vom Stein—the delivery of the army from the flogging discipline of Frederician Prussia and the introduction of—shall we say: true French, unflogged manliness? That would be an injustice to us Americans! Do not forget that Gneisenau was in America in 1782-1783. In G. H. Pertz's great work on *The Life of Field-Marshal Gneisenau*, you may read (121): 'Gneisenau acquired in the United States definite views regarding the nature and conduct of a national war, the resolute and continued struggle, undeterred by failure, of all able-bodied men in their own country and on behalf of their own homes, against a hired soldiery fighting for an alien cause.' The latter is an apt description of the Frederician army, the most important feature of which was criticised by Gneisenau in his essay on the Prussian flogging system, concluding with the following words: 'If the proclamation of freedom of the back does not appear feasible, let us renounce all

our claims to culture, and seek the motives for good conduct in the rod, since we cannot find them in the sense of honour' (122). It was only the abolition of flogging that made the German national army possible. It made it possible that Ernst Moritz Arndt, in his memorable letter of February 2, 1813, should promise to General von Gneissnau, who was in the Prussian service, that 'all the fice and magnanimous from every quarter of Germany would flock to his side,' as 'a sure antidote to that military pedantry and callousness which had brought Germany to the pass in which she now found herself.' It might be said that Voltaire in 1806 at length made good his defeat at Rossbach, and that Voltairian—and therefore, please, also American—spiritual freedom triumphed over the flogging methods of Frederick II. !”

It was Professor Hobohm's turn to give a wink and a smile, as he said: "Hans Delbrück's remark is possibly true, however distressing to pacifists: 'The historic changes in the fortunes of humanity move within the angles of the world's battles'."

Manfred replied: "That does indeed seem to have been at one time applicable to the enslaved people of Prussia. At any rate, Max Lehmann, your other authority, closes his description of the backwardness of the Frederician army (for which he, like Baron von der Goltz in *Rosbach and Jena*, considers Frederick the Great to have been largely responsible) with the words: 'However painful the admission may be to a patriotic heart, the Frederician army, which was so closely associated with the claims of the absolute monarchy and the aspirations of the nobility, had to be beaten on the field of battle before there could be any serious question of reform.' Thus the war of liberation of the Prussians would appear to have been won already in the year 1806. Lehmann, however, declares conscientiously that the internal reform of Prussia which followed was only possible because Frederick II. was unable, and finally no longer attempted, to bend his western provinces beneath the Frederician yoke. Because, already in Frederick's time (and without Delbrück's 'angles of battles') the West had long since advanced irreclaimably beyond the maxims of Frederician political science, Frederick II. proposed—according to Max



Lehmann—to get rid of these western provinces, to relinquish them to the French, to barter Saxony or Mecklenburg, to sell Emden to the English and so on. Consequently he built no fortresses in the West, and erected customs-barriers against his own provinces on the other side of the Weser. His eastern provinces he visited every year, the western only twice in the last twenty-three years of his reign. In these undesired western provinces he reversed the steps taken to introduce the Prussian military constitution, and tolerated the continued existence of the constitutional rights of the diet and of the remnant of the German intellectual world, whence Baron vom Stein *almost* succeeded in building up a new, non-Frederician Prussia and saving the State. *Almost*! The attempt failed, because the East-Elbe Junker party got the upper hand and secured the dismissal of Baron vom Stein and Hardenberg, because the one wanted a sort of ‘Prussian national state’ and the other at least ‘a revolution in the good sense.’ The reforms of Stein and Hardenberg did make possible the wars of liberation, but within the ‘angles of these battles,’ there swung back into place the prison-door of reaction and of the Frederician spirit and closed in this royal castle—many fear, for ever; others believe that the March air of 1848 or the wind of Bismarck’s new era blew open the reactionary prison-doors. I dare not venture an opinion.

“In any case the cradle of the reforms and of the ‘wars of liberation’ seems to have been not in the East, which Frederick oppressed and degraded, but in the West.

“These wars of liberation secured to the English that world supremacy, against which Napoleon rashly invited continental Europe to contend; and in the East too these wars of liberation did much to strengthen the absolute domination of the Russian knout. In short, the Germans were compelled once more, as under Frederick II., to fight strenuously in the interests of England’s world policy, while themselves remaining the victims of an infatuated small-state nationalism, and to undergo that incorporation with the Russo-Prussian barren land, against which Goethe had warned, and to which he preferred a union with the states subject to the genius of Napoleon.”

Hegemann : " Do you not consider that Goethe's failure to appreciate the enthusiasm for the wars of liberation was a blot on his fame ? "

Manfred : " Could not Goethe feel sure that, after his own achievements and those of the other great Germans despised by Frederick II., Germany would never again sink back into that ignominy into which Frederick II. had plunged her ? Could Goethe doubt that the most serious danger threatening the Germans was not from France but from Prussia ? "

Hegemann : " I am quite unable to grasp your meaning. "

Manfred : " Having once had Goethe, the Germans can never again be as deeply humiliated as they were humiliated by Frederick II. The French might be in a position to place German finances under French supervision, as Frederick II. placed Prussian finances under French supervision and entrusted them to the care of French junior officials. It was possible under Napoleon and even under Bismarck, and it may be possible again, for Germans to be forced to fight against Germans in the interests of France, England or Italy, as they were forced to do by Frederick II., for instance, in 1740 to 1745, when the French were able to conquer Alsace, thanks to Prussian aid. But, after the victory of Napoleon it was impossible, and will, thanks to Goethe, be impossible also in the future that a King who can neither speak German nor think German shall ever again interfere with the intellectual life of Germany in the hostile and presumptuous manner of Frederick II. and his successor, with their French Academy, French theatre and Prussian *dissertation* and Prussian religious edict—certainly it would not have been possible if Napoleon had been victorious, as Goethe hoped. If matters had gone in accordance with the wish of Goethe and of Napoleon, the United States of Europe would have been secure. In a united Europe Goethe's Germany, by reason of its intellectual weight and its mass, would have played a more important rôle than was allotted to the Russianised, pre-Bismarckian Prussia after the defeat of Napoleon. You doubt whether Goethe was right in considering that the greatest danger threatening Germany was not from Napoleon, but from a Russianised Prussia ? But could anything be more anti-

German ? Could anything be less in the spirit of Goethe than Prussia, as it came to be after the fall of Napoleon, the Prussia described, for example, by Erich Marcks in his biography of the Emperor William I. ? Erich Marcks, whose judgment is not without weight in Prussia, certainly did not speak with any satisfaction of the spirit then prevailing in Prussia of 'heated antagonism to all the claims and the men of the new age, of the system of pressure and compulsion, of the vain resistance to the progressive social and political forces of the day.' Could anything be more contrary to the spirit of Goethe ? 'You summon folly and darkness to your aid ; I summon intelligence and light,' said Goethe in 1823 of the monarchists of his time."

Hegemann : "Surely the elasticity with which Prussia recovered under Bismarck is proof of the power of the Frederician idea. Would Prussia have been capable of her amazing victories without the Frederician inheritance ?"

Manfred : "Before the amazing victories of the great Napoleon France was politically in very low water. The period from the defeats of Louis XIV. up to the victories of Napoleon was of approximately the same duration as the period of Germany's political disintegration and impotence, which began with the death of Prince Eugene and the Frederician civil wars and ended with the rise of Bismarck. Why should Bismarck need the Frederician inheritance any more than Napoleon needed the inheritance of Louis XV. ? One of Bismarck's first acts was to break with the Frederician policy of hostility to Austria, whom he treated leniently in 1866 and made his ally. This alliance Frederick II. did not desire, though he could easily have had it."

Against this view the Berlin historian, Hans F. Helmolt, raised the following objection : "The fact that Bismarck did this after he had overthrown Austria, and deliberately divested her of her rôle in the German world, you have modestly passed over in silence. It is possible to support any view by that method, that is to say, by turning the facts upside down."

Manfred : "After Bismarck's condemnation of the 'strange modesty which appears to prevent people from making up their minds to recognise Austria as a German power,' and after his

poetic admission : ' I recognise in Austria the representative of an old German power, which has often and gloriously wielded the German sword,' that immoral act of ' divestment,' to which you, Professor Helmolt, have just alluded, would be an act of such deliberate folly, that, for the sake of Bismarck's reputation, it would be wise ' to pass it over in modest silence.' Bismarck spoke appreciatively of Austria's ' good fortune to rule alien races, which had long ago been subdued by German arms.' Evidently you, Herr Helmolt, in contrast to Bismarck, regard subjection to German arms as a misfortune, and desire a speedy emancipation for the races bowed beneath the German yoke. And as you would fain consider German and Prussian arms and German and Prussian culture as one and the same, I cannot but agree with you."

Since this good-natured little passage-of-arms had not modified the view of either disputant, Manfred said : " Neither did Bismarck admit Frederick's claim that the Rhine should be the frontier of Germany. What would have happened if, at the time of the belated reconquest of Alsace in 1870, the Austrians had attacked Prussia in the rear, as Frederick II. attacked the Austrians in the rear when they triumphantly possessed themselves of Alsace in 1744 ? In 1744 it was not yet too late ; at that time there was no objection against the German conquest, and it might have been made secure. Was not the fact that in 1870 it was perhaps unwise and certainly dangerous simply part of that Frederician inheritance for which you expect Bismarck to be grateful ? You have seen the world, and you know something of the nature of the great colonial powers such as England, America and also France (who can claim ownership of a territory the size of the United States and to a true capital). You know what blind political self-satisfaction and what dangerous political hopes began to obsess the German people. In fact Bismarck was also seriously hampered by the Frederician inheritance when in 1879, in the worst tradition of Frederick II.'s customs-warfare policy, he blocked the way to economic union with Austro-Hungary. What do you imagine would have happened to the United States of America if the farmers of the eastern states had been allowed to erect customs and freight

barriers against the cheaper corn of the middle West in the way that Bismarck protected the Prussian farmers against the corn of Hungary and the Balkans? It cannot even be conceived: Pennsylvania and New York would now be maintaining great armies against Illinois and Nebraska, and on Lake Michigan and the other great lakes on whose waters no battleship has ever sailed, huge dreadnoughts would have perhaps already waged famous naval battles. Are you not glad that I should extol Frederick the Great as the forerunner of Werther, of *The Robbers*, of *William Tell* and of German romanticism, and as the patron of German folk-song and of the alchemy of Faust, and do you really expect me to admire him as a politician as well?

Hegemann: "Yes, you ought at least to appreciate his excellent internal administration."

Manfred: "During the Seven Years' War Frederick II. complained that he had no time for the internal administration of Prussia; though he was finding plenty of time for his ineffectual imitations of Voltaire's poetry. Internal politics call for patient and devoted work—a virtue which no one who has studied the subject will ascribe to Frederick the Great. Bismarck once complained: 'Frederick the Great's habit of meddling with the departments of his ministers and officials as well as with the lives of the subjects, sometimes appealed to the imagination of William II. as worthy of emulation. During my period of office the propensity to marginal annotation in this style was so keen that it often gave rise to difficulties. But what offended Bismarck in his own official capacity he found some excuse for in the case of Frederick the Great, because 'the patience with which, before coming to a definite decision, he collected information regarding legal and technical matters and listened to the opinion of expert and competent authorities, gave a certain practical authority to his marginalia.' Doubtless this was intended by Bismarck as a reproach against the present—(Manfred was speaking in the year 1913)—reigning sovereign for having less patience, and consequently less authority than Frederick II. To this reproach William II. might justly have replied as follows: 'I understand the nature of my great

ancestor better than is possible to you, my dear Bismarck, and therefore I know that nothing was more alien to the nature of Frederick the Great than that tedious 'patience, with which, before coming to a definite decision, he collected information regarding legal and technical matters,' for which you have ventured to give him credit. Pray inform me, for instance, my honoured Duke of Lauenburg, where, in respect to the not uninteresting question of the dismissal of a chancellor, you find in my distinguished progenitor so much as one spark of this patience, which may be very commendable in a day-labourer, but is quite incongruous in a great king. Or are you perhaps unaware of a fact that was communicated to me by Professor Dr. Hintze at the time when he was introducing me to the history of Prussian administration; namely, that Gustav Schmoller, that doughty panegyrist of Frederick II., ventures to grumble at what he rashly describes as the 'high-handed and arbitrary interference with justice by the great King,' who in the lawsuit of the miller, Arnold, against Herr von Gersdorff, displayed his excessive bias towards the peasantry by reversing the perfectly well-grounded verdict in Gersdorff's favour, and dismissed a number of judges as well as the then chancellor and chief justice, Fürst? You understand Herr von Bismarck? And Frederick the Great also said to his chancellor: 'Hold your tongue' and 'Go to the devil.' You maintain that Frederick the Great listened to the views of competent experts before coming to a definite decision. There you are exaggerating for your own ends, since before dismissing Chancellor Fürst, Frederick the Great listened only to the view of a major unskilled in legal matters, and declared that he placed more confidence in a soldier than in all the legal bigwigs. You complain that the opinions you have ventured to express to me regarding my marginal instructions and criticisms in the style of Frederick the Great did not meet with a gracious reception. I hope that you now understand the reason for this ungraciousness.' With some such purely Frederician and yet very pertinent retort might your Kaiser Wilhelm II. have replied to Bismarck's faultfinding.

"Certainly even the worshippers of Frederick the Great admit

that the conduct of their King in the affair of Fürst and the miller, Arnold, was a mistake, but they say that it was an exception. Yet there is no lack of evidence that Bismarck's opinion of Frederick the Great, though by no means uncritical is yet too favourable. Frederick was on other occasions guilty of unjustifiable interference with the administration of justice, as is proved, for example, by Preuss (123), who relates how in 1785 Frederick converted a sentence of three-years' imprisonment into a death penalty in spite of the weighty reasons to the contrary submitted by the court. Preuss also relates how cunningly the court contrived to circumvent the royal caprice by making it unnecessary to submit sentences to the King for confirmation, thereby preventing a repetition of such interference with the course of justice.

"Perhaps even more distressing are the thirteen letters with reference to a 'kitchen-clerk' composed by Frederick the Great in 1786 (124). 'In the investigation,' says Preuss, 'it was found impossible to convict the kitchen-clerk, Röber, of any dishonesty.' But Frederick refused to give way. Thirteen times he wrote letters declaring that his kitchen-clerk had 'stolen,' 'stolen a great deal,' 'stolen shockingly,' 'stolen a quite abominable amount,' and the King seems like an evil sprite intent upon seeing this kitchen-clerk, against whom nothing could be proved, none the less punished with the 'cart.'

"The idea that Frederick II. engaged in any serious legal studies or had any expert knowledge of such matters is a delusion which can be altogether dispelled.

"Under these circumstances it is astonishing that Frederick's much-extolled reorganisation of the administration of justice never got beyond the initial stages? Cocceji, the distinguished son of the Heidelberg professor of natural law, whom Frederick did not appoint but found in occupation of the post of Minister of Justice, was indeed, as Carlyle says, a veritable Hercules in cleansing the Augean stables of Prussian justice. But his draft of a *Corpus juris Fridericianum* remained a fragment, says Gustav Schmoller, who also admits that the aim of Cocceji's civil code was not actually attained by the *Codex Fridericianus*, since it only existed on paper. Cocceji's learned work on

natural law also remained uncompleted. The arbitrary and unjust dismissal of the chancellor, Furst, had later the satisfactory result of giving his worthy successor, Carmer, in the thirty-ninth year of the reign of Frederick II., an opportunity of putting into effect certain admirable theories which at that time, as Schmoller admits, hardly more than tinged the omnipotence of the police-controlled state. Schmoller, who is certainly not prone to faultfinding, continues: 'If, like Carmer, one were to proceed on the principles of the Silesian peasant lawsuits, one would, as it were, convert all judicial procedure into summary arbitrations, and reduce the parties and the advocates to silence. . . . In any case the effect of the reform was only beneficial . . . so long as one was inclined to regard the judicial office as an earthly providence. When these conditions vanished in the nineteenth century . . . the Prussian judicial system could not but appear antiquated and untenable, more especially as compared with the Rhenish-French procedure.' Thus Frederick's admirer, Schmoller, was compelled to do homage to Napoleon. The great Savigny says in criticism of the famous Prussian civil code, the draft of which began to be published just before the death of Frederick II., that it abandons the lofty and rigorous principles of Roman law, and yet does not evince a due consideration for the rights of the individual—a criticism the justice of which is admitted by Schmoller."

Hegemann: "You only see the faults. Do not forget the brighter side. Consider, for instance, what Schmoller described as Frederick the Great's 'exemplary financial administration'."

Manfred: "Schmoller is so anxious to praise Frederick that he only really interests me when he is forced to admit that praise is impossible. Let us see what the *Dictionary of Political Science* has to say of Frederick II.'s finances. The long article, 'Finance,' in the pocket dictionary is not, to be sure, written by a Berliner, but by the famous South-German scholar, von Eheberg, who perhaps gives us the true story." Manfred turned over the pages and read out a passage from time to time: "In finance, as in every domain of public administration, Frederick II. was the supreme head. The former centralisation



of authority was more and more abandoned, and was hampered by the provincial administrations and special independent financial organisations, which transacted their business directly with the King. As a permanency such a state of things would have been intolerable.' . . . 'From 1766-86 excise, customs and monopolies were subject to a special administration controlled by the *Régie*. This extremely unpopular institution was, however, abolished by Frederick William II. . . . Not until 1787 were the tariffs—which until that date varied in the different provinces—made uniform.' That strikes rather a different note from Schmoller. When one tries to understand Frederick II. as a financial administrator, one gets the impression of an old skinflint, who, out of mistrust and spite towards his heirs, deliberately envelops his affairs in mystery, buries his gold or hides it in a stocking, or sews a roll of coins into a mattress. It was years after his death before it was possible to unravel this 'intolerable state of things,' as von Echeberg calls it. Bismarck, in the thirty-second chapter of his *Reflections*, suggests that possibly Frederick II.'s 'vanity degenerated towards the end of his reign' and that he may have aggravated this disorder so that 'posterity might notice the difference between his government and that of his successors.' In how confused a state Frederick II. left his affairs is amusingly illustrated by the fact that even at the present day, of two such distinguished scholars as von Echeberg and Schmoller, the former complains of the gradual 'loss of the previous centralisation of authority,' while Schmoller declares: 'Centralised administration has its limits. The Frederician state overstrained this principle of unification and tutelage. The citizens and the peasants continued in a state of dependence; there was a lack of free, co-operative organisation in all the domains of public life.' Although Schmoller none the less ventures the assertion: 'In respect of political economy and finance, Frederick the Great stands on the highest level of his age,' this is not in fact tenable, because at that time all over the world—and in many countries far more seriously than in Prussia—a great work was being done on the lines of English and French enlightenment. Listen to von Echeberg once more: 'The land-tax reform of Charles VI. in

the then Austrian Lombardy and the taxation adjustments under Maria Theresa and Joseph II. represent, as Adolf Wagner, of Berlin, justly insists, the most important step to be taken towards the introduction of a more general and uniform direct taxation in any of the principal European states before the nineteenth century.' But the Prussian historians have the audacity to assert that Germany had to be saved from Maria Theresa, in order to achieve her recovery upon Frederician lines."

Hegemann: "At any rate you must admit that Frederick exercised an exemplary thrift."

Manfred: "I am unable to think of the builder of the 'New Palace' as thrifty. But he did inherit his father's fixed idea of hoarding up as much precious metal as possible. With this treasure which they had withdrawn from the economic life of the nation, these great kings of Prussia planned to contend the more successfully against the Emperor and the Empire.

"You know that Frederick II. in the year 1775 calculated (125) that his savings would enable him in 1778 to take the field once more against the German Empress with his glorious and much-thrashed army; and he did indeed embark on this very costly enterprise. Do you call this thrift?"

Hegemann: "It is distressing that you should try to contest every virtue in the great King. Surely you can leave him a few plumes?"

Manfred: "None at all, I fancy; for they are all borrowed."

Hegemann: "Think of his magnificent internal colonisation of which Goethe too showed his appreciation by his eulogy of the colonising work of Frederick the Great in the second part of *Faust*.

Manfred: "I find it impossible to conceive that the great Goethe, who realised the importance of the colonisation of Western America, was thinking in the second part of *Faust* of the paltry achievements of Frederick II. Professor Schmoller, in spite of his addiction to eulogy, estimates the number of colonists for which all the Hohenzollerns together were responsible during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries at only 30,000 to 40,000 farmers and 100,000 smallholders and cottagers."

Hegemann: "Will you not accord due honour to this faithful work, even though it is on a small scale? You ought not to expect that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries colonists should be conjured up by millions and towns by hundreds, as was possible in America in the nineteenth century."

Manfred: "Millions of colonists every year, as in our country, no, perhaps not. But towns by hundreds, why not? In the thirteenth century the English founded twenty towns in Southern France alone, and at the same time the Germans founded a hundred towns in Bohemia alone. You speak with praise of Frederick II.'s work on a small scale. There is a right moment for everything. At that time the world was being divided up, and a gifted sovereign with a great army might surely have achieved something more impressive than, at what was probably a disproportionate expenditure of capital, the establishment of a few thousand farms on inferior soil. Frederick II. wanted to be the 'permanent lieutenant-general of the imperial troops' of his phantom emperor, Charles VII., 'marionette' by the grace of France. If, instead of this, he had devoted mind and energy to being lieutenant-general of Maria Theresa, as Prince Eugene had done before him, he might have reconquered for the Germans a portion of the lost colonial empire of the Hapsburgs.

"For the millions of German settlers who had to leave their own country no colonial territory had been secured; they had to supply 'cultural manure' for foreign colonial empires. Instead of this we have 140,000 farmers settled in Germany in two centuries, and we are to be overwhelmed with admiration of this achievement.

"At the very gates of what was still a great German Empire there lay awaiting German settlers the infinitely fertile Balkan territories and beyond them Asia Minor. Would not these territories have accrued to the German people just as inevitably and almost automatically as Siberia accrued to the Russians, had not the great King of Prussia, with an utter lack of statesmanlike vision, preferred to plunder in his own country, in order to make a name for himself, as he himself put it? But for Frederick II., claims such as those asserted by Joseph II. in

1781 to Wallachia west of the Aluta, to portions of Albania and Serbia and to Bosnia and Herzegovina, in his negotiations with the extremely accommodating Empress Catherine of Russia (126), could easily have been enforced—at any rate much more easily than to-day, when it is no longer possible to justify such colonial aspirations. But for Frederick II., in any case, Maria Theresa's colonising activities in the East would have been of immense political importance; compared with them the much-extolled colonising efforts of Frederick II. seem a comparatively trivial episode in internal politics. Maria Theresa raised Siebenbürgen to the rank of a Grand Duchy; in it there now reside 250,000 Germans, and the number would be ten times as great, had not Frederick's fratricidal war directed the thoughts of the rulers primarily to war and preparation for war, and the thoughts of the subjects to flight from their rulers."

Hegemann: "Surely you exaggerate."

Manfred: "Read Nettelbeck's biography. This famous Prussian describes how the young men of his native city fled from the cruel inhumanity of Prussian militarism, how the Dutch colonies might rather have been called German colonies, and how, for instance, in Surinam the owners of the plantations were to a large extent his own countrymen. German energy was squandered in the most disastrous fashion. Do not forget that the crazy nationalism of the small nations, which is now the scourge of the Balkans, only made its appearance in the nineteenth century, and should probably be regarded as a consequence of the failure of German cultural enterprise. If in Germany the human dignity represented by Goethe and Baron vom Stein had not been finally crushed by Frederician contempt for humanity and by the flogging system; if monarchy had stood in Germany for culture instead of constant warfare; if there had been a Germany civilised in Goethe's sense, can you doubt that the Balkans would have become as inevitably German as the people of Alsace and Lorraine became French, or, if you prefer, as the Siberian races became Russian?"

"Instead of admiring the colonising achievements of the Hohenzollerns, one should perhaps for once in a while consider the other side of the picture, and realise the effects upon the

development of Prussia and Germany of the flight from Prussian military slavery and of the temporary depopulation of the country, the extent of which in the western provinces is described by Professor Max Lehmann. There can be hardly any question that it was the more energetic and efficient section of the population who fled from their own country to become owners of foreign plantations. Those who remained and submitted to Prussian brutality were probably the best possible soil for the growth of that 'Prussian lackey spirit' (if I may make use of an expression coined by Theodor Storm during his stay at Potsdam), which may perhaps supply wonderful lieutenants for Alsatian Zabern, but is incapable of colonial conquest.

"And even if you were to reckon all Silesia, which Frederick purchased so dearly, as new German territory, would it amount to very much ?

"What are all these Prussian achievements compared with the irreparable injuries inflicted by Prussian particularism. It is too easily forgotten that the fearful and devastating civil war, which Frederick II. for forty-six years waged against the German Emperor in the fields of war, diplomacy and commerce, struck Germany out of the ranks of the great powers at the very moment when the revolutionary changes that were taking place in France would have made it easy, or at any rate possible, for a united German Empire to reconquer the lost provinces, and, during the war between England and France, to acquire the much needed colonial territory. People fail to realise that Germany might now be one of the great world empires, but for the diplomatic and poetic ineptitudes and vanities of this hysterical Prussian Rolando Furioso, Frederick II."

Manfred, who was beginning to get heated, laughed and exclaimed: "I am getting as excited about it as if I myself were a German. But can any one contemplate calmly the way in which the Germans were cheated by their 'great' King ? Is it fair play ?" Manfred laughed once more, and then continued calmly: "In any case, Lord Macaulay in his brief essay on Frederick the Great seems to me to satisfy Thomas Mann's requirements in respect of heroic humour much better than Carlyle in his six volumes. Listen how Macaulay appreciates

Frederick II.’s heroic weaknesses. Manfred had Macaulay’s *Essays* at hand, and read the following passage on the Seven Years’ War :

“ ‘ It is difficult to say whether the tragic or the comic predominated in the strange scene which was then acting. . . . Enemies all round him, despair in his heart, pills of corrosive sublimate hidden in his clothes, he poured forth hundreds upon hundreds of lines, hateful to gods and men, the insipid dregs of Voltaire’s Hippocrene, the faint echo of the lyre of Chaulieu. . . . We hardly know any instance of the strength and weakness of human nature so striking and so grotesque as the character of this haughty, vigilant, resolute, sagacious blue-stockings, half Mithridates and half Trissotin, bearing up against a world in arms, with an ounce of poison in one pocket and a quire of bad verses in the other ’.”

Thomas Mann, who seemed to disapprove as much as I did of the flippant manner in which Macaulay spoke of the King’s distress, remarked, not without emphasis : “ At that time nations numbering close upon a hundred million were contending against some five million ; fourteen sovereigns against one ; troops numbering seven hundred thousand against troops numbering two hundred and sixty thousand.”

Manfred : “ Yes, that is often insisted upon—as though Frederick had defied the world as did Louis XIV. or Napoleon—although as a matter of fact it is only true at most of a very brief period following the Anglo-French Treaty of Kloster Zeven ; and not really true even then, because at that time the Russians had retired from the field, as the result of premature rumours of the death of the Empress. At that time Frederick did seem for a few weeks to be in a state of isolation. But it was only apparent. The English Government saw in Frederick a serviceable puppet, whom they employed for the purpose of ‘ conquering America in Germany,’ as the all-powerful Pitt expressed it. Of India, the crown-jewel of the English, which by the way, was also wrested from the French at that time, Pitt made no mention. This English Government never recognised the Treaty of Kloster Zeven ; it had no intention of abandoning so soon its hold on the useful King of Prussia.

Frederick, far from standing alone, was, on the contrary, so certain of being everywhere indispensable that he postponed his answer to the new British offer of money until he saw that there was no longer any hope of becoming once more a vassal of France (127). So he still remained a general in the service of the first great power in the world, a rôle which was, after all, more remunerative than taking the field once more on behalf of the French, who in 1745, when he asked for a subsidy of four million taler, only gave him half that amount. None the less, he was loth to abandon the French, and his letter written to his sister, Wilhelmina, immediately after Rossbach, is expressive only of regret: 'I must inform you that new agreements which I have entered into with the English make it impossible for me to conclude a separate peace with the French'.

"In the great historic conflict for world supremacy between England and France, Frederick, with utter disregard of German interests, present and future, selected on each occasion the party which seemed to promise most advantage to his Prussian particularism. During the Austrian War of Succession, he twice took the field on the side of the French. In *L'Histoire de mon Temps* Frederick explains that he was dissatisfied with the financial and military achievements of the French, and he praises the English, for whom he fought after 1756, as follows: 'Of all the nations of Europe, England is the wealthiest; her commerce embraces the whole world; her riches are immense, her resources almost inexhaustible' . . . 'with such wealth at his command, the King of England could, as it were, conjure up armies out of the ground and invade the remotest corners of the globe.'

"And it was not only profitable to fight for the English; it was also necessary; for Frederick had been gaily composing jests and poems at the expense of the female rulers of France, Russia and Austria, when it appeared that Count Kaunitz had undermined the position of the jester in Paris."

Here Thomas Mann interposed thoughtfully: "Yes, Frederick despised and insulted all three with an utter lack of political discretion. At table, in the presence of the lackeys, he openly referred to them as 'the three whores of Europe,'

although, or perhaps because, he knew that his observations were certain to reach the ears of the spies of the foreign courts."

Manfred: "Yes, Frederick had a curious notion of wit, and when at length he realised what he had brought upon himself in Paris, he thought that, by transferring his allegiance to England and Russia, he had achieved an adroit counter-stroke; and he was doubly deceived, firstly, because—to the delight of Kaunitz, who was really very clever—he thereby supplied just the impetus required in order to drive France into the arms of the Kaunitz alliance, and, secondly, because the Tsarina, whom Frederick had proclaimed to the world a whore and at the same time appealed to for help as a Prussian ally, suddenly drew back, because she did not mean to let herself be 'prostituted' by England into an alliance with Frederick, as she herself put it. The particulars of this brilliant achievement of Frederician diplomacy may be found in amazing detail in the publications of the Prussian state archives. The purpose of these publications, apparently so detrimental to Frederick's reputation, is to reveal the truth, and thus show how great Frederick II. must have been in order to dare commit such follies. The folly is visible to all; it is reserved to Prussia to perceive the greatness of which it is an evidence."

Thomas Mann: "'Frederick's defence,' says Ranke, 'procured him high esteem in the world of European states. By defending himself, King Frederick established himself as the great man of the century'."

Manfred: "The bloody conflicts to which Frederick II. devoted the first twenty-three years of his reign are proudly referred to in Prussia as the first, second and third Silesian wars. That has a fine historic ring; much as in the Reuss younger line they proudly honour a Henry XXVII. as the absolute sovereign of all the Reusses. Yet all the barbarous German squabbles started by Frederick had only one common significance for all Germans, namely, that they weakened Germany and secured her defeat in the struggle for the lost provinces and for a 'place in the sun' at the very moment when these might have been secured. Tacitus anticipated the wisdom of Richelieu and of the Peace of Westphalia, for which Frederick II. contended.



Tacitus said: 'May the Germans never cease to envy and fight against one another.' "

## FREDERICK II. SACRIFICES ALSACE, LORRAINE AND FLANDERS

I was not at all pleased with the picture which Manfred had drawn of Frederick the Great, and I felt as though I must shake off some hideous nightmare. I exclaimed: "You really misrepresent the relations between Frederick the Great and the French. You always talk as though Frederick had bartered Alsace-Lorraine, the Franche Comté and the Belgian Netherlands to the French."

Manfred, who was seldom in any but a laughing mood, now answered me almost fiercely: "If he had but bartered them! Then he would at least have got something in exchange. But he got nothing for them save the satisfaction of his own vanity and love of fighting, and not only that, but he made it impossible that the Empire should ever recover these lost provinces or even obtain compensation for what had been lost."

One of the company here interposed with a triumphant laugh: "But, if I am not mistaken, Alsace was lost in the Thirty Years' War and Lorraine in 1738, that is to say, both before Frederick's accession to the throne, and the Netherlands not until after his death."

Manfred was inexorable: "The handing over of Lorraine to the French is one of the concessions which Austria had to make in order to secure the throne for Maria Theresa, for the sole reason that she was not sure of the loyalty of the German electors. The French promised to recognise Maria Theresa—that is to say, to leave Germany in peace at a particularly difficult moment (128)—as a return for the surrender of Lorraine, but they quite expected that Austria would, with the aid of Prussia, make an attempt to recover this dainty morsel. When, however, contrary to expectation, Frederick II. took the field not *against* but *on the side of* France, not *on the side of* Maria Theresa but *against* her, the French decided not to be content with Lorraine, but to have a try for Flanders."

Manfred had recovered his laughing mood: "You seem to have read Frederick's own works as little as most other admirers of the great King. What do you say to the following passages from Frederick's *Histoire de mon Temps*? 'What induces the Queen of Hungary to press the French so hard at the present time, if it is not the hope of reconquering Alsace-Lorraine?' (*'Enfin qu'est-ce qui excite à présent la Reine de Hongrie à presser les François avec tant d'ardeur, si ce n'est l'espérance de reconquérir l'Alsace et la Lorraine?'*) These words of Frederick refer to the period between the first and second of the civil wars which he started. A few pages later Frederick says of himself (he speaks of himself in the third person): 'The successes of the Austrian armies in Alsace soon compelled him (that is to say, Frederick the Great!) to declare war against the Queen of Hungary. The alliance with Prussia was at that time the greatest good fortune that could befall the French'! (*'... Les succès des armées autrichiennes en Alsace, l'obligèrent bientôt à se déclarer contre la Reine de Hongrie. L'alliance des Prussiens étoit tout ce qui pouvoit arriver alors de plus avantageux à la France.'*)

"You see that Frederick the Great is proud to boast that he helped the French and secured them in the possession of Alsace and Lorraine. But Frederick's Prussian admirers follow their idol blindly even on this path. When the French historian, the Duc de Broglie, ventured to reproach Frederick with being a bad ally to the French, he was, in the *Researches into the history of Brandenburg and Prussia* (129) almost indignantly reminded of the fact that 'the renewed intervention of Frederick in the Austrian War of Succession occurred at a time when the French army was being hard pressed by the Austrians and almost compelled to relinquish possession of Alsace. . . . Frederick's intervention rescued France from a very dangerous situation; only as the result of Frederick's further operations, which kept the Austrian armies busy in Germany, were the French successes in Flanders made possible.' These things are set down by Prussian scholars without turning a hair, and they go on to declare with all seriousness that the Frederician wars of secession were necessary, because the

emperors of the House of Austria had shown themselves incapable of defending German honour against foreign countries."

Thomas Mann: "I can only repeat: Frederick was a martyr. He had to do wrong, in order that the earthly mission of a great nation might be fulfilled."

Manfred: "Naturally everything must be permitted to such a martyr; and so the great *Federic* goes on calmly to relate in his *Histoire*: 'Marshal von Schmettau had been sent by the King of Prussia to Louis XV., both to report concerning the movements of the French army, and to press the King to fulfil his promises, and to pursue the Queen's troops as far as Bavaria, when they would re-cross the Rhine. Schmettau informed the most Christian King that the King of Prussia would take the field on August 17th, and that he would employ 100,000 men for the *diversion* (*diversion* can surely only be translated here as 'stab in the back') which he was going to make on behalf of Alsace (that is to say, to save Alsace—for the French!). This Marshal used every means to instil more vigour and energy into the French armies.' And then Frederick begins his description of his invasion of Bohemia with the words: 'The following is the general plan which was made for invading Bohemia and forcing the Queen to recall her troops from Alsace. The great Prussian army was to invade Bohemia in three columns.' And there are impostors—in Prussia they are dubbed 'historians'—who maintain that Austria betrayed the German cause in the West and that Prussia saved it.

"The visit of the Prussian *chargé d'affaires*, Schmettau, to Louis XV., which is here unblushingly recorded by Frederick, is one of the most repulsive incidents in the whole catalogue of German humiliations. Louis XV. had exacted the oath of allegiance in Alsace, which had been delivered over to the French by Frederick II. The city elders of Strassburg had pleaded the ancient rights which the city once enjoyed in the German Empire, and had begged that they should not be compelled to bend the knee when doing homage, but their petition was refused. After King Louis had received the homage of the Alsatians, he proceeded with four French field-m Marshals to besiege Freiburg-im-Breisgau, which a loyal Hun-

garian commandant defended for six weeks against the superior forces of the French. The French estimate the number of their dead during this siege at 6000. During these six weeks, the ambassador of Frederick II. so persecuted the French King with offers of advice and requests for help that the latter complained to Frederick of his importunity. If there be any Germans who are not convinced by the admissions which Frederick II. makes in his *Histoire* regarding the treacherous handing over of Alsace and Lorraine to the French by Prussia, their doubts will be removed if in an unguarded hour the testaments of Frederick II. ever become public.<sup>1</sup> In them there occur passages such as the following from the testament of 1752: 'Since the conquest of Silesia, our interests demand that we should remain in alliance with France. Silesia and Lorraine are two sisters, the elder of whom is married to Prussia and the younger to France. This bond obliges them to pursue an identical policy. Prussia cannot calmly look on and see France lose Alsace and Lorraine, and the *diversions* (that is to say, stabs in the back of the German Emperor) which Prussia may execute in the interests of France, are effectual, for they carry the war at once into the heart of the hereditary domain (that is to say, into the domain of the German Emperor! and for seven years also into Prussia! Was there ever a more shortsighted fool than Frederick II.?). For the same reason France cannot suffer Austria to reconquer Silesia; for that would seriously weaken an ally of France, who is useful in furthering her ends in the North and in the Empire ('the Empire' is the German Empire!), and whose *diversions*, as I have just said (one must hear it twice, to be able to believe it!) will certainly save Alsace and Lorraine in case of any serious and unexpected danger (that is to say, for France! The hope of being able to help the French against the German Empire makes little Fritz quite cunning. Fritz continues :) The policy of

<sup>1</sup> These "testaments," which, at Bismarck's prudent—and, in view of his relations to the House of Hohenzollern, quite natural—request, were kept secret, were in fact published after the flight of the Emperor William II. They unfortunately furnish a terrible exposure of Frederick II. For the benefit of Germans who cannot read the language of Frederick II., a translation was also published in 1922.

the court of Versailles has always been to resist the aggrandisement and despotism of the Emperors. Prussia has the same interests. . . . France can support us Prussians by executing *diversions* in Flanders and on the Rhine, by stirring up the Sublime Porte against Russia or Austria in the course of a war, and by hiring the troops of German princes in order to place herself at the disposal of Prussia. (That is the 'League of Princes'!) From all that has been said it is clear that this alliance is *natural*.' These were the words of Frederick II.

"And Frederick is *naturally* the greatest German statesman, and if ever Germany should again lose Alsace-Lorraine, her victorious enemies will very fitly compel the humiliated German nation to erect a monument to the great King in Strassburg or—at any rate until the war-indemnity has been paid off—to suffer the picture of this great King to adorn their flags and stamps.

"I see you think I am making game of you. Then pray listen to the political wisdom of your great King in French. It is really an insult to the German language to translate into German any utterance of this short-sighted traitor to the German cause. The following are his actual words :

*'La Silésie et la Lorraine sont deux soeurs dont la Prusse a épousé l'aînée et la France la cadette. Cette alliance les oblige à suivre la même politique. La Prusse ne saurait voir d'un œil tranquille enlever à la France l'Alsace ou la Lorraine, et les diversions de la Prusse en faveur de la France sont efficaces, parce qu'elles portent à l'instant la guerre au centre des pays héréditaires. La France, par une raison semblable, ne peut souffrir que l'Autriche reprenne la Silésie, parce que cela affaiblirait trop un allié de la France, qui lui est utile pour les affaires du Nord et pour celles de l'Empire et dont les diversions, comme je viens de le dire, sauvent à coup sûr la Lorraine et l'Alsace, en cas d'un danger éminent et imprévu. La politique de la cour de Versailles a de tout temps été de s'opposer à l'agrandissement et au despotisme des Empereurs. Les intérêts de la Prusse sont les mêmes.'*

"The author of these shameless utterances is Frederick II. If he had been a German, he would have been hanged for high treason. It is fortunate for him that so few people in Germany understand French."

Hegemann : " The testament, in which these things appear, is a secret one."

Manfred : " But Frederick the Great was, if possible, guilty of even more brazen expressions of treachery to the German cause, which have already been published and which would not be tolerated if the knowledge of the French language in Germany were not restricted to waiters and to the active and inactive members of the 'conspiracy against truth,' participation in which is regarded by educated Prussians as a national duty. The published works of Frederick II. included the pamphlet with which the great King, at the beginning of the Seven Years' War, tried to influence the French in favour of Prussia, and which is presented in the guise of a *posthumous* letter of Cardinal Richelieu. Frederick II. makes the originator of the Peace of Westphalia say among other things :

" '... the Cardinal de Fleury... informed me that the Franche Comté, Alsace and Lorraine were subject to French domination....' (Then the Cardinal warns against the German Emperor.) 'If France were not careful, she would find herself opposed by an enemy more powerful than Charles V., as ambitious as Ferdinand II., and more energetic than Charles VI., who would claim persistently the Franche Comté, Alsace, Lorraine and perhaps Flanders.' And then Cardinal Richelieu addresses the King of Prussia : 'It was reserved to you, Sire, to ward off all these evils, to make secure the throne of our sovereigns and to slay this hydra.' The Cardinal signs the letter as 'very sincere admirer, Armand Jean du Plessis Cardinal duc de Richelieu.'<sup>1</sup>

"The 'hydra,' against which Frederick is thus, according to his own admission of 1756, proudly defending the French kings, is the German Emperor, who would have been 'more powerful

<sup>1</sup> " '... le cardinal de Fleury... m'a appris que la Franche Comté, l'Alsace et la Lorraine étaient soumises à la domination française... si la France n'y pourvoyait, elle se trouverait avoir en tête un ennemi plus puissant que Charles-Quint, aussi ambitieux que Ferdinand II., plus actif que Charles VI., qui revendiquerait sans cesse la Franche Comté, l'Alsace, la Lorraine et peut-être la Flandre.... Il vous était réservé, Sire, de prévenir tant de maux, d'assurer le trône de nos rois et d'abattre cette hydre... tres sincère admirateur Armand Jean du Plessis Cardinal duc de Richelieu."

than Charles V.,' if Prussia had not supported the French. The spirit of the great Richelieu was certainly right in congratulating the French that Frederick II. helped them against the German Emperor. The alliance which Maria Theresa concluded with England in 1743 provided for the reconquest of Alsace, Lorraine and the three bishoprics, and it is clear that even after the end of the Austrian War of Succession, Austria had by no means abandoned her intention of reconquering Lorraine, the mother-country of the Emperor. But, after the painful experiences with the Prussian enemy, Kaunitz, the Chancellor of the Empire, justly remarked in his report delivered on August 28, 1755: 'We shall never be able to wrest Lorraine from the hands of the French, unless we have first crushed (*ecrasieret*) Prussia.' Patriotic Germans will no doubt wish to supplement this just remark by Voltaire's favourite oath, which was also frequently and loyally echoed by Frederick II.: '*Ecrasez l'infâme!*'

"The reconquest of Lorraine could not but seem at that time both desirable and practicable to every one who knew what Frederick II. knew. This *Federic*, in his *Animachiavel*, described as follows the transfer of Lorraine to French domination: 'When the people of Lorraine were obliged to change their allegiance, all Lorraine was in tears; they were loth to lose the scions of those dukes who had been for so many centuries in possession of this flourishing country, and some of whom are so esteemed for their goodness that they might well furnish an example to kings. The memory of the Duke Leopold was still so dear to the people of Lorraine that, when his widow was obliged to leave Lunéville, all the people threw themselves on their knees before the carriage, and the horses were held up several times; one heard nothing but groans, one saw nothing but tears.' <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Lorsque les Lorrains ont été obligés de changer de domination toute la Lorraine étoit en pleurs; ils regrettoient de perdre les rejetons de ces ducs, qui depuis tant de siècles furent en possession de ce florissant pays, et parmi lesquels on eu compte de si estimables par leur bonté, qu'ils mériteroient d'être l'exemple des rois. La mémoire du Duc Léopold étoit encore si chère aux Lorrains, que quand sa veuve fut obligée de quitter Lunéville, tout le peuple se jeta à genoux au devant du carrosse, et on arrêta les chevaux à plusieurs reprises; on n'entendoit que des gémissements, and on ne voyoit que des larmes."

"The family of the German Emperor therefore obviously ruled as 'cleverly'—to use Goethe's expression—in Lorraine as did Maria Theresa in Hungary. At the present day the family of the German Emperor is less bitterly bewailed in Lorraine. At the present day—after a century and a half of French domination—the French and the people of Lorraine can describe the German reconquest of Lorraine as a crime; at that time, in every war with France (such as that, for instance, started by France and Frederick II. in 1740), it was regarded as a duty and a natural aim. Up to the year 1789 Alsace and Lorraine were described in French official language as '*Etranger effectif*.' As late as 1909 the great French historian, Lavissee, wrote: 'After his return from Prussia (1753), Voltaire did not dare go to France, and therefore wandered about for more than a year in Alsace and Lorraine.'

"On June 10, 1757 (that is to say, just at the time when Frederick was beginning to threaten suicide) the Margravine of Bayreuth wrote to her brother: 'In France they are afraid that you may league yourself with the Empress in conjunction with the Empire . . . and that you may restore Alsace and the Franche Comté to the Court of Vienna in exchange for Silesia. I am informed that they dread this arrangement more than ever.' (The French regarded it as a matter of course that Alsace-Lorraine would revert to the German Empire, in spite of Frederick's efforts to the contrary.)

"On September 21 of the same year (that is to say, immediately after the long Brutus and Cato letters to his sister and immediately after Frederick had declared himself prepared to accept even the most ignominious French terms) Frederick wrote to Finckenstein, '*solé et secretissime*' and '*en dernière confidence*,' that he had already known at the middle of June 'that France had apprehensions that I might make peace with the Empress and might league myself with her, with a view to falling on France jointly with the Empire, and that in exchange for Silesia I might restore Alsace and the Franche-Comté to the Court of Vienna. I was assured that in fact Count Colloredo had already conceived this plan, and that the Empress would have agreed to it, if she had not been dissuaded by Count Kaunitz.'



"Thus the childish French could not understand why a German prince should continually wage war against the people of his own race, and feared that Frederick might join with the Austrians to attack the French, reconquer Alsace and the Franche Comté, and receive Silesia in exchange."

Hegemann: "But these are perhaps mere fantastic impossibilities?"

Manfred: "You are right. A German national policy was a fantastic impossibility, so long as the Empire had an enemy of the type of Frederick II. One can in fact only laugh at the suggestion that Frederick would fight for the strengthening of the German Empire. The weakening of the Empire was the chief ambition of his life and the groundwork of his fame."

Hegemann: "If I remember rightly, Frederick offered to fight for the Empress before the first Silesian war."

Manfred: "That fact is often quoted by German historians with a view to saving Frederick's honour, but Frederick's remarks in his *Histoire* remove all doubts as to its unimportance. Frederick's offer was made after he had already invaded Austrian territory, and he himself admits that his offer was not meant seriously. He says: 'Although the King of Prussia was firmly determined in respect of the side which he had taken, he none the less deemed it advisable to make efforts towards a settlement with the Court of Vienna.' Much, therefore, as, before a duel, the two antagonists, as a matter of form, are invited to become reconciled, Frederick II. continues: 'As it was to be expected that these offers would be rejected, Count Gotter was in this case authorised to declare war on the Queen of Hungary. The army was more expeditious than the ambassador; it entered Silesia two days before the arrival of Count Gotter in Vienna'.

"Imagine if to-day (1913) the French were to succeed quite unexpectedly in occupying Alsace-Lorraine and if they offered Germany an alliance upon condition that Alsace-Lorraine should remain French—could Germany accept this offer? And yet, in view of the fact that Alsace-Lorraine belonged to France for over a hundred years, there would be some sense in this offer. There was no such sense in Frederick's occupation of Silesia." A few moments before, Thomas Mann, who had been chattering

with some other guests, had rejoined us. He quickly seized the drift of the discussion, and interposed as follows :

Thomas Mann : “There it was : Frederick attacked the imperial dynasty—he, the Margrave of Brandenburg, whose duty it had been, as lord high chamberlain, to present the washing basin to the ancestors of Maria Theresa ! And this attack had been prepared long before ! Frederick seems to me both a lonely and a cunning young man. Louis XV. said of him : ‘*C’est un fou, cet homme-là est fol*’.”

Manfred : “The remarkable shrewdness of Louis XV. is often underestimated. His penetrating intelligence is amazingly revealed in the great new *History of France*, published under the auspices of Lavissee. And the following is a passage from Leopold von Ranke’s biography of Frederick II., which shows clearly how favourably Louis XV. compared with Frederick II. as a politician. Ranke writes as follows regarding the situation before the first Silesian civil war :

“‘It was very unlikely that France would allow Maria Theresa’s consort, who was sprung from the House of Lorraine, to mount the imperial throne ; for then the claims of this House would be renewed once more. An Emperor belonging to this House, should he attain actual power, would have put forward serious claims to the possession of Lorraine. And doubtless England, who was involved in fresh struggles with the Bourbon powers, would have taken the side of Austria in such a struggle. The war of the old great alliance against France would then have been renewed. And was it not to be expected that Prussia too, as in the last campaign, would take the side of Austria ?’

“The grave danger here described by Ranke, with which France was then threatened, was averted by King Louis XV., who could always keep his head and hold his tongue and who without much trouble succeeded in enticing over to the French camp the hotheaded and poetry-writing young Frederick II., together with the best part of the German armies. Lorraine was saved ; a gain for France which can hardly be overestimated ! There are, it is true, many Prussian historians who refuse to regard the loss of loyal Lorraine as detrimental to Germany, and maintain that the transfer of Silesia from the

hands of Maria Theresa into those of Frederick II. was so great a gain for Germany that Frederick II., who for twenty-three years fought on behalf of this transference, should much more be reckoned among the great statesmen of Germany than Louis XV. among those of France. The distinguished Professor Ranke, of Berlin, also considers that Frederick's failure to fight for instead of against Germany in no way reflects discredit upon him. On the contrary, he concludes very much as you do, Mr. Thomas Mann, that Frederick's struggle against the German Empire was indispensable 'in order that the earthly mission of a great nation might be fulfilled.' Ranke expresses his famous view, which begins with the words: '... it is perhaps not unprofitable... to consider for a moment what might have happened in the year 1740 and afterwards, but for a Prussia and a Frederick II.' Ranke means that but for the great Frederick Germany might have suffered a still worse disaster, but it is impossible to demonstrate convincingly that anything could have exceeded the disaster of the Silesian civil wars, the loss of Alsace-Lorraine and the disintegration of the German Empire, with all its intellectual and economic consequences—I mean, from the point of view of a German. Ranke, therefore, is pronouncing not so much a scholarly opinion as a confession of faith; and how much value is to be attached to Ranke's confessions of faith was once demonstrated very convincingly by Frederick Nietzsche. Nietzsche says: 'Who wants the confessions of faith of a Ranke or a Mommsen, who are, by the way, scholars and historians of quite another sort than David Strauss (read: Reinhold Koser), and who, as soon as they want to tell us about their faith and not about their scholarly opinions, transgress their bounds in an irritating manner.' Nietzsche is joking. He demonstrated repeatedly—in fact, all his life long—with refreshing plainness, how much the scholarly opinions are worth of those whose confession of faith is not worth listening to.

"When Ranke describes the sufferings which Germany might have endured if there had been no great Frederick, he reminds one of the comforter, who points out to a noble and unhappily married woman what a lonely old maid she might perhaps have been if she had not found her uncongenial husband.

If Ranke and other complacent Berliners want to labour the historic 'if,' why not ask, though with less complacency, what Germany would have become *if*, instead of the Franco-Prussian enemy of the Empire, Frederick II., a great German sovereign had arisen, or at any rate a sovereign friendly to Germany, like Prince Eugene! Napoleon I. outlined this possibility very clearly, when he exclaimed:

"How was it possible that no German prince understood the aspirations of the German nation or at least succeeded in turning them to account? I am quite certain that if it had been the will of heaven that I should be born a German prince, I should infallibly have succeeded, amid the mighty upheavals of our age, in uniting the thirty million Germans. And, if I am right in my judgment of the German people, I believe that, if they had once chosen me and proclaimed me as their emperor, they would never have forsaken me'.

"Those are the words of Napoleon, of whom Goethe said: 'he has the greatest mind that the world has ever seen'; but Napoleon overlooked the fact that, with such an unscrupulous enemy of the Empire as Frederick II. in the country, even the greatest German Emperor must be doomed to impotence."

Hegemann: "Those words of Napoleon smack of St. Helena."

Manfred: "When Goethe heard any one speak against the fallen Napoleon, he said: 'Leave my Emperor in peace!' This was after Prussia's attempts to overthrow the *German* Emperor had been successful. It was in fact perhaps quite unnecessary that Germany's saviour should be a German prince. In any case, rather than a Prussian of the type of Frederick II. it would have been better to have had a Frenchman of the type of Prince Eugene, who, as Goethe's Götz von Berlichingen proclaimed, 'encamped like cherubim with flaming swords before the frontiers of the Empire, against those wolves, the Turks, and those foxes, the French, and guarded at once the threatened territories of our dear Emperor and the peace of the Empire'; while Frederick the Great did everything that lay in his power to induce the French and the Turks to invade the Empire. In 1778 Frederick II. was still hoping for a French

invasion, and in his testament of 1782, he still had expectations of a Turkish alliance against Austria. What he desired, however, was not any splendid joining up of forces from Berlin to Bagdad, but an alliance against the people of his own race.

"Frederick II., who honoured the great Louis in heaven, and Voltaire as Louis' prophet on earth, was so misguided, or desirous of misguiding, as to extol Prince Eugene and boast himself his disciple. When as Crown Prince he secretly begged for money from the courts of Vienna and St. Petersburg, fear of his father's thick stick induced him occasionally to feign that his mendicancy was due to a thirst for learning, and to ask not for 1000 talers but for 'a new edition of the life of Prince Eugene.' 'I have been asked for twelve copies; I am pestered with demands for them from morning till night.' (130) However unfavourably Frederick II. may compare with Prince Eugene, it would yet be a mistake to assume that it was only as a snuff-taker that Frederick modelled himself on that noble warrior; he followed in his footsteps in yet another respect. The life of Frederick II., like that of Eugene, began with dissatisfaction at the unsympathetic treatment he met with at home. Eugene, who wanted to be a soldier, was commanded by Louis XIV. to devote himself to study. For this reason Eugene left Paris, and is said to have taken an oath never again to re-enter it unless he did so weapon in hand. Frederick, who wanted to study, was flogged so unmercifully by his half-lunatic father into a military career that he seems to have taken an oath in much the same way as Eugene. To be sure, when Frederick did journey outside Prussia, as well as on the occasion of his subsequent attempt to enter France, he behaved so tactlessly that he was both times arrested. But he fulfilled his sworn promise, and Prussia has probably never witnessed so much slaughter and devastation as during the first twenty-three years of Frederick's reign. It is possible, moreover, that Frederick supplemented his anti-Prussian oath by the vow never to enter the land of his beloved French weapon in hand, and to this vow too he remained faithful.

"If one wants to labour the historic 'if,' as Ranke did, it is quite possible to conceive the salvation of Germany in the

eighteenth century without any Prince Eugene or any pro-German Frederick or Napoleon. After all, France, Germany's most dangerous rival on the continent, had no Louis XIV. or Napoleon in the age of Frederick II. On the contrary, France was strenuously engaged under the shrewd and—perhaps for that reason—peace-loving Louis XV. in getting rid of that noxious despotism, which Frederick II. admired and emulated. In order to conceive a mighty Germany, one has only to imagine the non-existence of the 'great' Prussian kings from Frederick William I. to Frederick William II. inclusive. After such a deliverance, the great Maria Theresa—that 'great man,' as Frederick II. called her—and her son, Joseph II., would have been able to direct their noble energies into more distant fields, instead of being forced to consume them in contending against the Prussian rebel. That the absence of Frederick II. would have sufficed to make Germany powerful was convincingly demonstrated by Frederick II. in his posthumous letter of Cardinal Richelieu. I cannot bring myself to give Ranke credit for better judgment than Frederick the Great, however little this may amount to. Yes, it would have been easy for the German Emperors in the eighteenth century to triumph over the French, but not over . . ."

Here, Manfred, usually so polite, gave vent to what sounded like an English oath compounded of 'damned' and 'nation' and 'Potsdam'—something like 'potsdamnation!' and then at once exclaimed apologetically: 'Pardon me! That I really cannot and dare not translate.'

Thomas Mann: "Truly, one might sometimes almost fancy that Frederick II. was a goblin, who stirred up hatred and loathing everywhere and plunged the world in havoc; a sexless, malicious troll, for whose destruction a hundred million human beings wore themselves out in vain, for he came into being and was sent into the world in order to bring to pass great and necessary earthly events."

Manfred: "The poetic force with which you so often press to the heart of the matter is truly admirable. Listening to your description of the malicious goblin, a foreigner feels almost disposed to echo Voltaire's battle-cry, as Frederick II. so often

did : *Ecrasez l'infâme* ! Only consider. If Frederick II. had not in 1744 prevented the reconquest of Alsace-Lorraine, and if he had not permanently weakened Germany's power of resistance, these old German provinces would have been German for the last 170 years ! Thereby one important pretext would have been removed for that senseless squabble between France and Germany, which is to-day the chief obstacle to peace and harmony in the continent of Europe ! Thereby that abyss between the nations, which still yawns in the Vosges, and which threatens to swallow up the peace and hope of the world, would have been closed ! ”

One of the company, who had not heard Manfred's detailed observations regarding the loss of Belgium, interposed : “ You speak of Flanders ? At any rate you cannot make your favourite, Frederick II., responsible for the fact that the Empire lost the Flemish provinces.”

Manfred : “ If you want proof of Frederick's guilt in this respect also, I would recommend you to consult the works of the famous Prussian historian Droysen, who gave the name *Frederick the Great* to that work in which he relates how Frederick inserted into his treaty with England a secret clause whereby the Austrian Netherlands (which belonged to the Empire as Burgundian territory) were excluded from that neutrality which the treaty was to ensure to the Empire. At the special request of Frederick II., the expression, ‘ the Empire,’ which stood in the English draft-treaty, was replaced by the word ‘ Germany,’ not because Frederick had any intention of realising the pious German aspiration : ‘ It must be the whole of Germany,’ but, on the contrary, because he intended to hand over Flanders to the French, as he had handed it over to them during his two first civil wars. It is necessary to know this secret clause of the Treaty of Westminster, in order to understand the unshakable confidence with which Frederick II. after Lobositz importuned the French with his proposals for peace and alliance. Frederick II. believed that he could disregard the determination of Madame de Pompadour, who finally frustrated all these Prussian attempts, because he could say to the French : I have become, it is true, the ally of your

greatest enemy, England, but do not misunderstand me ; I am still your best friend, and I have already secretly secured for you Austrian Flanders, which you desire above everything. Possess yourself of Flanders. The German Empire is indeed defenceless, for I myself am fighting against the German Emperor ! I, Frederick the Great, who have already detached Silesia from the German Empire ; the great Frederick, in whose territories no priest is any longer allowed to pronounce from the pulpit the old German prayer for Emperor and Empire, and whose sublime mission consists, and will continue to consist, in doing, to please you French, everything conceivable to humiliate the German Empire ! Thus might Frederick II. have spoken. No wonder then that this Frederick was certain that the French would be horrified at his threats of suicide in 1757-60. But has ever a nation driven self-destroying perversity further than the Germans, who allowed themselves to be talked into regarding this traitor as a national hero ? It is true that the great German policy of Maria Theresa and Joseph II. made it possible to retain Flanders for a time, in spite of Frederick II. But when Flanders was subsequently lost during the French Revolution, this was a triumph of Prussian policy in the spirit of Frederick II., a triumph of the enemies of German trade, who, since the Herrenhausen treaty of 1725, had used Prussian influence to the detriment of the German Ostend Trading Company, the last memorial of the great Hapsburg Colonial Empire. What signify the clumsy and unsuccessful attempts of Frederick II. to build up a Prussian mercantile fleet and to develop—after he had failed to barter—Emden, compared with the injuries which his policy inflicted on German trade in Flanders ! ”

Hegemann : “ Was not a portion of the Austrian Netherlands a territory with an alien language, which could not in any case have been permanently retained ? ”

Manfred : “ Certainly, and that applies also to the greater part of Lorraine. But what splendid compensations for the bloodless conquest of the lacking colonies these old portions of the Empire would have presented, in case the Empire was subsequently to develop only as a German-speaking domain. Moreover, there is no need for me to tell you that many



distinguished political economists consider the reconquest of Belgium to be indispensable to the healthy economic development of Germany, and that the exceedingly valuable port of Antwerp is situated in a region, the language of which is hardly distinguishable from Low German. However, thanks to the vagaries of Prussian particularism, Germany's ambitions in this domain have become hopeless, dangerous and even criminal. Yet it seems to me that the Germans have quite as much reason to think regretfully of their irretrievable loss of Flanders as have the French, who cannot forgive their great Louis for not securing for France the important territory of Flanders, together with Strassburg and the Franche Comté. In the great French historical work published under the editorship of Ernest Lavisse, Louis XIV. is reproached for this omission in the following words :

“ ‘ At that time the Spanish Netherlands might have been conquered for France, without doing violence to the nature of things or wounding too greatly the feelings of the inhabitants. What to-day would be a crime was not so then. . . . It is true that these provinces, which the habit of a common life had bound together since Burgundian times, already felt themselves a united whole with a common fate. They loved their French neighbours as little as the Dutch, but the thought of a Belgian fatherland was at that time not yet born. The towns of Artois and Flanders, which France acquired in the seventeenth century, soon became French and even patriotic, much as Alsace, after its loose connection with Germany had been severed, soon felt itself an integral part of France. . . . ’ ”

#### LOUIS XIV. AND FREDERICK II.

“ This French estimate of Louis XIV. includes many other unfavourable comments on the great King, whom it is very tempting to compare with Frederick the Great, but of whose ‘ greatness ’ his subjects began to doubt even before his death. Lavisse’s estimate of Louis XIV. concludes with the following sentences, of which some, but not all, are surprisingly applicable to Louis’ admirer, Frederick II. :

“ ‘ One is justified in the belief that Louis XIV., under the exceptionally favourable circumstances in which he was placed, could have achieved very much more, if he had not pursued his contradictory policy, the guiding principle of which was to obtain glory for himself through the humiliation of others. This policy was a mixture of wisdom and imposture and of fits of arrogance, which destroyed in one moment an intrigue that he had long been engaged in weaving ; a policy which so greatly injured, insulted and befooled the whole world, that the alliances against him became more and more comprehensive, and finally embraced all Europe ; this policy of incessant warfare . . . etc. etc. For a long time France loved, aye almost worshipped this King ; in his words and deeds France admired her own greatness and glory. . . . Louis XIV. bestowed on his kingdom despotism. After his death, no one was able to control this form of government, and so the country drifted into a ‘ despotism without despots ’ . . . Voltaire directed attention once more to the greatness of Louis XIV., whose faults were forgotten. In spite of the harsh judgment passed upon him by subsequent historians, he has retained his great reputation. While the mind perceives the destructive character of the reign of Louis XIV., the imagination is seduced by its surface brilliance. One likes to recall this man, who was not intrinsically bad ; he possessed distinctions and even virtues ; he possessed beauty, grace, and the gift of saying the right thing at the right moment. When France was glorious, he was her glorious representative ; when France was defeated, he refused to admit defeat ; he continued to enact his great rôle from the glorious prelude down to the dark scenes of the last act, on the magnificently decorated stage of his palaces and amid the dancing fountains of his gardens. . . . ’ This is the judgment of Lavoisier’s history.

“ The brilliant picture drawn by Voltaire of Louis XIV. enchanted Frederick II. ; but, in his devoted emulation of this model, the only one of Louis’ faults that he avoided was that of religious intolerance. And which of Louis’ virtues did he attain ? Louis united his people, and he gave them a great national art and literature ; he was intimately associated with

the great men of his nation as their pupil, friend and teacher, and thus became himself a supreme master of the French tongue, 'of the right word at the right moment'."

Hegemann: "You rank Louis XIV. as a great patron of the arts and sciences, as Voltaire described him, but you attach little importance to Goethe's assertion that, through the deeds of Frederick the Great, the first true, lofty and living subject was furnished to German poetry. How do you explain the extraordinary efflorescence of German literature in the Frederician age?"

Manfred: "If this question had been put to Frederick II., he might justly have referred to the description given by Voltaire in his *Annals of the Empire* of the great transformation which took place in the German Empire during the reigns of the emperors Leopold, Joseph I. and Charles VI.—that is to say, just before the accession to the throne of Frederick II. Voltaire says that Germany had altered more in the last sixty years than during the whole eight hundred years since the time of Otto the Great. Voltaire could not know that the credit for this marvellous transformation would subsequently be claimed by officious Prussian historians on behalf of the electors of Brandenburg; and Frederick did not desire that Voltaire should know it. Why should such a gifted nation as the German—anxious to learn and with more cultured neighbours—if it were only given a little peace, not be able to 'establish its own worth,' as Schiller deemed possible, when he declared that German art was left 'unprotected and unhonoured' by Frederick? I do not doubt for a moment that the Frederician wars only delayed that great development, which began with Gottsched, Gellert and Klopstock, quite independently of Frederick II. Moreover the period of peace, in which at length after 1763 the arts were able to develop magnificently, was not due to Frederick II., but to the steadfast determination with which the three Queens, Maria Theresa, Pompadour and Catherine, held in leash the disappointed Brandenburger, with his: 'we must have another scuffle.' In his testament of 1768 Frederick II. gives an eloquent picture of the foreign wars, in which he wanted to entangle the German Empress, in order that he might fall upon

Austria in a fresh civil war : ‘ *qu’alors maître de toutes nos forces, nous puissions entamer la maison d’Autriche.*’ No Prussian will venture to doubt that the nineteen-year old Goethe would have offered his services as a volunteer in this new campaign, and written verses in praise of ‘old Fritz,’ fought against the Emperor, and perished upon the field of glory, unless perchance he had preferred to blow out his brains like the unhappy Heinrich von Kleist, that great romanticist of belated Prussian national sentiment, the singer of the national hatred that Goethe despised. What a slavish notion must the Berlin professors cherish of the nature of the arts to be able to assert ‘that noble things can ever come to be, where despots govern and slaves bend the knee’ ! If only these sycophants could realise that in the end their Frederick the Great himself feared to grow tired of ruling over such slaves ! ”



3

*THE FIFTH CONVERSATION*

KINGS AND FLOGGED ARTISTS

A German writer—a German martyr! You will not find it to be otherwise.

GOETHE (1830).



## KINGS AND FLOGGED ARTISTS

ON the following day a conversation took place which seems to me the summing-up, as it were, of Manfred's disquisitions on the attitude of Frederick II. towards German literature. In this conversation too Thomas Mann took some part.

Hegemann: "What you related yesterday of Voltaire's ridicule of Frederick the Great's threats of suicide has given me a sleepless night. If Voltaire was justified in this ridicule, the memory of the great King would be marred, a thing which I should very much regret, for the sublime figure of Frederick the Great has often brought most precious consolation to my heart."

Manfred: "You seem to share Macaulay's opinion, that 'Of all the intellectual weapons which have ever been wielded by man, the most terrible was the mockery of Voltaire. Bigots and tyrants, who had never been moved by the wailing and cursing of millions, turned pale at his name'."

Hegemann: "I am very sorry that I interrupted you yesterday when you began to speak of Voltaire's replies to the King's threats of suicide. I feel a strong desire for further information on this subject, not because you described Voltaire's replies as being the most amusing things he ever wrote, but because of my deep interest in a question that concerns our great King."

Manfred: "Yes indeed, nothing could be more fascinating than to observe how Voltaire dealt with Frederick's repeated threats of suicide and entreaties that he should act as a peace-mediator. Voltaire was a gifted observer, possessed of intelligence and wit in Goethe's sense of the term. 'Wit is always regarded as a sign of a cold disposition,' said Goethe in 1809; 'it is in fact only the sign of a prudent, free and reflective nature,



which can disengage itself from objects. . . . Wit is the image of the idea; it is in fact the idea itself embodied with the minimum of reality.' These were Goethe's words. Frederick II. once said: 'Wit is a cosmetic which merely conceals the ugliness of the features.' Goethe, on the other hand, considered wit a worthy adornment of great minds.

"Voltaire knew the great King too well—it was he himself<sup>4</sup> who first dubbed him 'the Great'—for it to be possible that he should remain serious when he read the heroic jeremiads of Frederick II. Goethe specially praised Voltaire because, in his poems to individuals, he skilfully avoided ever transgressing the limits of seemliness. Voltaire tried to treat the extravagant suggestions of Frederick II. with seemliness. He began by trying to calm the agitated monarch. 'Your Majesty,' wrote Voltaire, 'has many partisans in France. I know for certain that there are many people there who would gladly preserve the balance of power which Your Majesty's victories have brought about. . . .' 'Your Majesty admires the deaths of Cato and Otho, . . . but neither our customs nor Your Majesty's situation are such as to call for a self-inflicted death. . . . It is indeed the duty of a man such as Your Majesty to continue to live. . . . I dare even go a step further. Believe me, if your courage were to drive you to such a heroic extremity, it would not be appreciated. . . .'

"But Frederick refused to be convinced, and continued, with or without the agency of his sister Wilhelmina, to pester the mocking patriarch with a succession of appeals in poetry and in prose: unless Voltaire will intercede for peace, I shall do away with myself! Voltaire was forced to speak more plainly. Faithful to his obligation as the poetic adviser of Frederick II., he admonished him: 'Your poetic epistle to Her Royal Highness, your sister, would move men to tears, if only you would refrain from referring in it to your own tears. . . . You love glory, and are now seeking it in a death, which other men seldom choose. . . . Some people will laugh at you. I may add, for it is now a time for plain speaking, that no one will regard you (as they did Cato, whom you so much admire) as a martyr for freedom. It is impossible to prevent judgment being

passed on one's self. You know in how many of the courts of Europe your invasion of Saxony is persistently regarded as a breach of international law. . . . I shall soon be sixty-five years of age, and, as you know, I have experienced much unhappiness, but I should die happy if I knew that you would remain among the living, and would devote yourself to expressing in deeds what you have so often recommended in your writings.' That, however, was asking too much.

"Frederick still persisted, even after the Battle of Rossbach, in entreating Voltaire's help, 'in order that the heroic fever of Europe might speedily be healed.' Voltaire was compelled to speak even more plainly, and he exhorted: 'I remember that Your Majesty often remarked that the people of Silesia were blockheads. Truly, Sire, it is very good of you to want to rule over such people. . . . Certainly, it is distressing to me that I have to pay away three-twentieths of my income in taxes, and so ruin myself for the honour of waging war against you, but do not imagine that it is avarice that makes me desire peace; not in the least; I am, however, anxious for your life. . . . Your Majesty threatens that, if you are driven to extremity, you will bring to pass yet another disaster and become a good-for-nothing. Is that anything new? What else are you after all, you rulers of the earth? . . .'"

"Seldom have I seen Manfred in better spirits than while he was reading these passages from Voltaire's letters. Thomas Mann, however, did not approve this representation of Voltaire's attitude, and drew our attention to the very sharp reproof which Voltaire received from Frederick: 'Be good enough to learn in your old age how you have to write to me! Take note that there are liberties which are permitted to writers and wits, but that there are insolences which cannot be suffered from them!'"

Manfred: "It seems as though Frederick must have written those words for the special delectation of Prussian historians. For a moment the King seems to have imagined that he could browbeat Voltaire, but he soon thought better of it. He apologised, and compared himself with a wounded boar that has attacked an innocent lamb. He once more showered

flatteries on Voltaire, as well as further entreaties 'to bring about peace by some skilful manœuvre.' Frederick II. looked upon the 'divine' Voltaire as all-powerful and as expressly designed to repair the consequences of Frederician errors.

"But, quite apart from the advantages which he hoped to gain through Voltaire's agency, had Frederick any real ground to complain of Voltaire in this connection? Did not Voltaire write to Frederick II., act for him and judge him in a spirit of lofty political wisdom, one might almost say Bismarckian political wisdom, and of that noble 'seemliness' admired by Goethe? And is it not really very comic that Frederick should recommend Voltaire to adopt a more becoming tone, since it was for the good tone of Voltaire's writings that the King had again and again expressed his special admiration? Even Prussian historians—for instance, W. von Sommerfeld in the *Researches into the History of Prussia and Brandenburg*—dub Voltaire the 'shield-bearer of literary *bienséance*, who, as censor of the satires of Frederick II., was more than once driven to exclaim: "Not so many insults!"' Goethe once said: 'Indeed, everything written by a man of such great talent as Voltaire is good, though I cannot approve all his audacities.' It was these audacities, however, which Frederick II. admired in Voltaire perhaps more than anything else, and of which his 'insults' were a clumsy imitation.

"The presumptuousness of Frederick's reproof to his teacher: 'There are liberties which are permitted to writers and wits, but there are insolences which cannot be suffered from them!' is especially flagrant in view of the fact that the Seven Years' War could have been avoided, if Frederick II. had practised what he preached, instead of by his 'insults' inciting the great powers to attack poor Prussia, and instead of laying claim in foreign courts to a privilege ordinarily claimed only by court jesters. The explanation of this amazing presumption on the part of Frederick II. is to be found in the continuation of his letter to Voltaire. The King of Prussia proceeds: 'Do be a philosopher at last, that is to say, reasonable.' It sounds as though Frederick conceived the difference between a king and a philosopher to be that a Prussian king need not be reasonable,

but could wield simultaneously the sword and the fool's rattle. Bismarck judged otherwise. Many of his comments on Frederick II. might have been penned by Voltaire. For instance, Bismarck once remarked: 'We are no longer living in that age when the insulting witticisms of Frederick the Great made the Empress Elizabeth and Madame de Pompadour—and therefore at that time France—the enemies of Prussia,' but 'the present-day politics of a German Empire, with a free press and a parliamentary constitution, cannot, in the stress of European difficulties, be prosecuted in the style of a royal order executed by generals.' And Bismarck's slightly malicious comment regarding the verses despatched by Frederick II. with the inscription, '*Pas trop mal pour la veille d'une grande bataille*,' suggests that the great Chancellor may have felt some irritation at the complaint made by Frederick II., during those very war-years in which he wrote most poetry, that he had no time to concern himself with the abuses, faults and negligences in the civil administration. Is not Bismarck's 'style of a royal order executed by generals,' reminiscent of Voltaire's description, based on his own observation, of Frederick's time-table between the second and third Silesian wars: 'All the state business was despatched in about an hour.' (Mirabeau, who was often surprisingly accurate in his information, spoke later of an hour and a half.) 'The secretaries of state and ministers were seldom allowed to approach him; there were some indeed to whom he had never spoken. His father had put the State finances into such good order, everything was despatched in such military fashion, obedience was so blind, that a country of four hundred square miles was governed like an abbey. . . .' The remainder of the morning was taken up with riding excursions and the flute. Lucchesini has described the lengthy duration of the meals. Echoing Lucchesini and de Catt, Voltaire continues: 'After dinner the King retired and made verses until five or six o'clock. Then came the French reader. The concert began at seven o'clock.'

"On May 12 and August 17, 1758, the King himself gave the following description of his daily programme in time of peace: 'I rise at seven o'clock, and, while I am dressing, I read my

letters. . . . I have about forty letters to read by breakfast. Half of them say nothing; a quarter of them are very trivial; the rest are bad news. . . . 'This lasts until half-past eight; then I mount my horse and go for a ride; this lasts until eleven o'clock. Thus I have time to allow my thoughts to mature. . . . From eleven until noon I dictate. I hear petitions, finances twice a week, appeals. I dine at one o'clock; this lasts until half past two, for I do not eat much.' (That the contrary was true is testified by Frederick's physicians and by Fredersdorf, to whom Frederick wrote on July 6, 1754, in regard to heavy additional kitchen expenses: 'I assure you that our food is not expensive but merely appetising!') Not only Lucchesini, but also de Ligne and others bear witness that the meals, with the table-conversations, often lasted several hours. Frederick continues: 'Then I go for a walk. Often I talk about business. At five o'clock I read, at seven o'clock I devote myself to music. At nine o'clock I have supper with six friends, and we talk a lot of gossip. That is forgotten by the next morning'."

Hegemann: "Do you really think that these foreign eye-witnesses are trustworthy?"

Manfred: "What an un-Frederician doubt! You amaze me! But if you really mean to suggest that non-Germans, even if they are as intelligent as Voltaire, deserve less confidence than any average nonentity, if he is German—then please read Baron von Diebitsch's famous notes on the 'Special arrangement of his time and business by King Frederick the Second,' which the Insel-Verlag has recently published under the biblical title of *The Daily Task of Frederick the Great*. Baron von Diebitsch was for many years after the death of Fredersdorf a kind of groom of the chambers to the great King. In his laborious notes I failed to discover anything that in any way refutes the convincing testimony of Voltaire, de Catt or Lucchesini. According to Diebitsch, for instance, Frederick's dinner always began at twelve o'clock and often lasted till after four o'clock. One thing, in any case, is proved *ad nauseam* by Diebitsch's notes, namely: that Frederick never forgot, even in his old age, what his father had thrashed into him. Like the most zealous of recruiting sergeants he diligently inspected over

and over again for forty-six years that same drill, which he himself had performed with reluctance and loathing on the paternal—or rather the Alt-Dessauer—drilling ground. In the drilling season (April 1 to May 17) he had all the drilling-exercises repeated three times weekly from eight to ten in the morning, and these exercises culminated every year in the magnificent reviews, which are described in detail by Diebitsch. These reviews included the famous cavalry rides: the attack was made ‘first at a walking pace; then at a trot, becoming faster and faster, then at a gallop, and then *en carrière*.’ This was always performed so brilliantly that foreign visitors were filled with astonishment and admiration. They had not conceived it possible that men and horses could be manipulated like clock-work in this fashion. Then came the infantry. Listen what Barin von Diebitsch says about them.”

And Manfred proceeded to read out the following remarkable passages from Diebitsch’s notes:

“ ‘Usually His Majesty did not have any more cavalry exercises on that day, but devoted himself to the infantry, who now marched up in a prescribed fashion in two lines of battle. All the principal orders were given by a cannon, situated a little way off and facing the centre of the line. In this connection a royal commandant was commissioned to see that the cannon was fired the moment that another adjutant of the King gave the order for this signal by riding out and waving his hat. The first shot was the signal to halt, to wheel inwards, or for the two lines to march up in some other fashion; the second shot, for the first line to charge, the battalions dashing across; the third, for the charge with platoons; the fourth gave the signal for the leftward turn of the second line; the fifth, for the firing with battalions; the sixth, with platoons; the seventh, for the making front of the second line, whereupon the colours of the first line also moved up immediately, and, at the eighth shot, fell in and advanced. At the ninth signal the first line halted, and charged again with battalions. At the tenth shot they wheeled to the left, the colours advanced, and at the eleventh shot, they fell in for the retreat. They then marched, and the twelfth shot gave to the second line the signal for falling in;

the thirteenth shot was fired when the first line was already near to the second, and thereupon the first wheeled to the left and passed through the second, which continued to advance. The first line placed itself in the prescribed alignment. Each column made front by wheeling to the left, and then all wheeled inward to the left, ordered arms and stood ready; the fourteenth shot gave the signal for halt; the fifteenth for battalion charge; the sixteenth for platoon charge; the seventeenth for left wheel; the eighteenth for retreat, which was continued down to the standing first line; then the nineteenth shot gave the signal for the second line to march through the first, and, as soon as this came into its alignment, the twentieth shot gave the signal for wheeling inward. The cavalry had in the meanwhile placed itself on the right wing of the two lines; and now the twenty-first shot gave the infantry the signal for opening ranks, and the twenty-second shot, for the whole corps to march past. There was no salute as they passed His Majesty, but as they came to the Queen all the officers saluted. When they had all marched past, His Majesty mounted his horse again, and rode straight back to the castle."

Manfred, who several times while he was reading had with difficulty suppressed an inclination to laughter, was here interrupted by his ten-year-old daughter, who had entered the room a short time before and overheard the last few sentences. Half sadly and half pityingly she asked: "And what did the Queen say?"

Manfred answered her in a deeply serious tone: "Nor horse nor rider met her eyes again."

The conversation reverted to the military exercises of Frederick the Great, and Manfred remarked: "I have played enough football to realise that to practise such military quadrilles until they go off without a hitch is—the devil knows!—no trifling matter. Especially if this perfection is to be attained not, as in football, through enthusiasm for the game, but through scoldings and floggings. This needs heroic patience and a spirit of royal sacrifice, and from the time of receiving his lieutenant's commission until his death, Frederick the Great made this sacrifice every year, down to the twentieth time,

unless he had to keep to his bed in consequence of excessive indulgence in the pleasures of the table or of gout. As to the manner in which this Frederician spirit of sacrifice was recompensed, the Prussian Staff-Major, Colmar von der Goltz, gives the following malicious example. After proving in his book, *Rosbach and Jena* (1883), that the Prussian army was on the whole in 1806 no worse but in many respects better than the army of Frederick II., and that the leaders too (including Scharnhorst and Blücher) were by no means devoid of intelligence (131), von der Goltz says: 'At Jena the Prussian infantry fell in by echelons from the right or left wing or from the centre, and then advanced with sounding trumpets and flying colours, until music and parade step were inevitably extinguished in the enemy's fire.' It sounds like the description of one of the special reviews of the great King!"

One of those taking part in the conversation interposed: "Do not be misled into imagining that because the King gave these great military displays every year he did not also every year hold very serious military manœuvres."

Manfred: "Yes indeed! Diebitsch gives an account of this too. Listen to what he says about it." Manfred read out:

"On the 23rd there was always a great manœuvre. . . His Majesty made a general suggestion as to the arrangement of the troops, in accordance with which the King's corps and the enemy corps made their special arrangements; they were, it is true, different each time, but as the same ground was always used for these manœuvres, and as, in view of the number of foreigners present, His Majesty did not want to make them too instructive, this difference was very slight. The enemy usually occupied the region between Steglitz, Tempelhof and Britz, and was for the most part attacked by the King's army on both flanks, frequently outflanked and defeated.' It is unpardonable in Napoleon, and proof of his revolutionary spirit, that the enemy in 1806 refused to follow this sensible example. After Seydlitz, Schwerin and Winterfeldt had died, it could hardly be expected of the great Frederick that he should have new strategic ideas."

Manfred continued: "Every year, after these great Berlin battles had been fought, came the journeys into the eastern



provinces, and there, as Diebitsch describes in detail, the Berlin spectacle was repeated in garrison after garrison upon a smaller scale. Review followed review, and special review followed special review. These were the famous annual 'review journeys'."

Hegemann: "On these journeys, many very important non-military matters were attended to."

Manfred: "Doubtless. Listen, for instance, to Diebitsch's accounts of the manner in which Frederick II. filled up the time between the reviews in the provinces: 'His Majesty conversed mainly with the Poles who were present in the hall, but he also spoke, unless he happened to be in an ill humour, with the general and commanders, but only a few words; then he betook himself to dinner'."

"Frederick II. evidently thought that, by slighting the Germans and paying attentions to the Poles, such a brilliant talker as himself could not fail to make good the irreparable injury which he had done to the German penetration of Poland by abolishing the Saxon-Polish Union."

Among Manfred's guests was a Herr F. von Goetz, who referred to the *Travel Conversation of King Frederick II. of Prussia in the year 1779* (132), from which Manfred had previously quoted a characteristic specimen. Herr von Goetz spoke with admiration of the King's attainments, as displayed in this travel conversation. "The directions of the aged king," said Herr von Goetz, "are brief and to the point. His questions go to the heart of the matter. And then there is his delightful humour. The slim nervous hand holds not the sword but the crutch-stick, which furnished the needed support for the bent frame. But with brilliant clarity his intellect masters the task that it has set itself."

After some comments had been exchanged on the value of this travel conversation, Manfred produced a copy of the work printed in 1784 in facsimile, and said: "Hitherto I have only been able to conceive this conversation as a poetic achievement of the Prussian patriotic poet, Gleim. In respect of dulness and improbability it seemed to me in no way inferior to his other poems. I was only withheld from criticising it by the

fact that the author devoted the proceeds to the assistance of those military orphans who had been overlooked by the great King."

Manfred turned over the leaves of this travel conversation of Frederick II., and read specimens such as the following: "The king on one of his journeys asks the Crown-Farmer: 'Why do you not cultivate any hemp?' Crown-Farmer: 'It does not do well here; in a cold climate it does better. Besides, our ropemakers can buy better and cheaper Russian hemp at Lubeck.' King: 'What do you sow then, where you would have sown hemp?' Crown-Farmer: 'Wheat.' King: 'Why do you not cultivate any dye-plants, madder, for instance?' Crown-Farmer: 'It does not thrive; the soil is not good enough.' King: 'You merely say this. You should have made a test!' Crown-Farmer: 'I did make one, but it was a failure.' King: 'Then what do you sow, where you would have had madder?' Crown-Farmer: 'Wheat.' King: 'Very well, stick to your wheat'."

Manfred remarked with a laugh: "This whole conversation makes the same impression on me as the famous anecdote of Frederick the Great and the signalman: 'On one of his exhausting journeys of inspection the King once met a man of the people, and asked him affably: 'Are you a railway signalman?' 'No, Your Majesty,' answered the man, 'the railway has not yet been invented.''" This and similar stories are related as evidence of the affability of Frederick the Great. If you see in them the 'brilliant clarity of a sovereign intellect,' I can understand your appreciation of the 'delightful humour' of Frederick the Great. Here is a specimen."

Then Manfred read out the following from the King's travel-conversation: "The King asks: 'Who is that man yonder to the right?' Counsellor Klausius: 'The inspector, Menzelius.' King: 'Am I in Rome?' They all have Latin names here! Why is this enclosure so high?' Counsellor: 'It is the royal mule stud.' King: 'What is the name of the colony?' Counsellor: 'Klausius-hof. It is also sometimes called Klaus-hof.' King: 'It is called Klau-si-us-hof! And what is the name of the other colony?' Counsellor: 'Bren-

kenhof.' King: 'That is not its name!' Counsellor: 'Yes, Your Majesty, I do not know of any other.' King: 'Its name is Bren-ken-ho-fi-us-hof.'"

Herr von Goetz took the *Travel Conversation* from the table and replied: "If you want a more convincing example of Frederician humour, I recommend you the following." And he read out: "The King related: 'When I was still Crown-Prince and at Ruppín, I met an old fellow who could describe the whole Battle of P'heibellín. I asked him: "Do you know why the Great Elector and Charles XI. of Sweden fought with one another?" The old man answered in Low German: "O yes, I can tell you that. When our Elector was a young man, he studied at Utrecht, and the King of Sweden, when he was prince, was there too. These two had a quarrel, and went for one another, and that was how it all began!"' And the poet Gleim continues: 'His Majesty spoke very good Low German, but he was so tired with sitting at table that he was almost asleep. King Frederick then went to bed early . . .'"

Manfred: "The old man's Low German answer is excellent. Thus he conceived the origin of a war, and he was quite resigned to it. And the Silesian wars of Frederick II., by his own admission, were started in a still more arbitrary fashion! And was not Bismarck of much the same opinion as the old man at Ruppín? It seems to me that if Frederick II., instead of making his famous 'review' journeys, had occasionally paid a visit to the Empress in the city of Vienna, which he had never seen, he might have learnt more, prevented many misunderstandings, saved hundreds of thousands of lives, and enhanced more effectually the vital energies of Germany."

Hegemann: "You should not underestimate what Frederick's annual journeys to the Eastern provinces did for the development of these districts and for the unification of Prussia."

Manfred: "Frederick II.'s Western provinces had made it clear to their royal tyrant that his visits were not desired. Consequently, in the twenty-three years after the Seven Years' War, he only twice visited the West, and distributed very little relief money there. Yet I am not aware that the Western provinces

are for this reason more backward than the Eastern. On the contrary, I believe Max Lehmann to be correct in his opinion that after 1806 salvation came from those Western provinces, in which Frederick II. had relaxed or suspended his interference with the national life and his offensive military and taxation policy, and in which he built no more fortresses, because he wanted to get rid of these provinces west of the Elbe."

"How the great Frederick really occupied himself on his important journeys of inspection he himself describes to his teacher on September 29, 1775. On that date he wrote to Voltaire: 'Would you like to know how we amused ourselves on the Silesian journey? Then you must know that you recited to me Merope and Mahomet, and, when the carriage jolted too violently, I learnt these pieces by heart; they made a very deep impression on me. Thus did I employ my time on the journey, and again and again I exclaimed: "Blessed be that fortunate genius, who, whether present or absent, always affords me the same delight."' No matter whether this was mere boasting or whether Frederick wanted to be believed, it seems to me that only a confirmed dilettante could have written thus. I have never ruled over a kingdom, but probably I am better served in my affairs than Frederick II., who wanted to do everything himself. It seems to me quite childish to imagine that, if a province was only paid one flying visit a year, there must not of necessity be a sufficient number of urgent memorials and petitions and of important information to be studied regarding local conditions to drive Voltaire completely into the background for a week."

Hegemann: "Was not Frederick merely anxious to say something pleasant to his friend, Voltaire?"

Manfred: "In the Seven Years' War also, Frederick repeatedly boasted to his reader, de Catt: 'You see how much I have read'."

Another of those present, the aged Herr v. W.-M., intervened: "During his journeys of inspection, Frederick the Great may perhaps have devoted himself mainly to military matters. And they were, after all, only comparatively brief episodes in his life. You can scarcely doubt that a man who

rose at four every morning was an absolutely indefatigable worker."

Manfred: "At four? Why not at three? For Diebitsch furnishes trustworthy evidence that this too was known to happen."

Herr v. W.-M. replied in a tone of mild reproof: "Well then! Are you not a little ashamed of yourself and will you not now speak with some respect of the untiring energy of the great King?"

In reply, Manfred took up once more Diebitsch's memoirs and read out: "'At the time of the reviews, His Majesty always went to bed very early, sometimes before eight o'clock. On the 26th, His Majesty had himself roused at three o'clock.'"

"This refers to the time of the journeys of inspection. I envy the great King his generous seven hours' sleep; I myself generally manage with six."

Herr v. W.-M.: "Owing to the exhaustion of the journey, the King may have slept longer than usual. You must remember his regular life at Potsdam."

Manfred: "This too is described in detail by von Diebitsch: 'In Potsdam the senior officer of the guard of the first battalion then brought the report, which His Majesty did not, however, always receive himself, because this officer had first to go the round after the tattoo, which was beaten at nine both in winter and summer, in order to be able at the same time to report that the guards were in order; consequently this officer frequently did not arrive until after His Majesty had retired to rest.'"

"So at Potsdam the time for bed was nine and for getting up four. Surely seven hours' sleep is a good allowance for a hero, who sits over dinner from three to six hours every day, and listens to daily concerts lasting from one to two hours?"

I tried to change the subject by asking: "Does not Frederick's devotion to music dispose of the theory sometimes put forward that he was a chatterbox?"

Manfred: "Do you consider it impossible that a chatterbox should listen quietly to music for from one to two hours a day? Do not forget that Frederick the Great usually played the first flute so that he could hear himself even on these occasions.

Later, when he had no more breath for flute-playing, one may assume that he enjoyed the rest afforded by these concerts. Consider, he had been declaiming poetry to his reader for two hours, and before that he had written poetry for two hours, and before that chattered for some three to six hours to his dinner-guests. The desire for self-expression even of a great king must finally exhaust itself."

Herr v. W.-M. : "You cannot get away from the fact, of which there is documentary evidence, that Frederick did none the less get through an enormous amount of work every day. Consider what he despatched every day in respect of reports, marginal notes and business letters alone! Read the five-volume *Collection of Documents*, published by Preuss in 1832, as an appendix to his unimpeachable history of the great King. Any one who knows how to appreciate constructive, statesman-like industry and inexhaustible patience will find this diary of the King's labours supremely inspiring."

With an expression of delight, Manfred stretched out his hand towards a half-opened parcel of books lying on a table at the side, and replied : "It is most fortunate that my second-hand bookseller sent me yesterday a copy of the first volume of this important *Collection of Documents*. After your recommendation I shall be most interested to read it."

Herr v. W.-M. took the volume out of Manfred's hands, with the words : "This excellent book will disperse all your doubts regarding our great King." Then he read out the following passage from the preface : "'The present documents, with their direct evidence, exhibit the untiring loyalty of the great King as father of his country more convincingly than any elaborate biography.'" And Herr v. W.-M., not without a certain solemnity, returned the volume to Manfred.

Thereupon Manfred gave an exhibition of his irresistible talent both as a reader and as a talker. "You rouse my curiosity," he said, and, opening the volume at the middle, he began to read, first casually, and then with increasing vivacity, the following letter signed by Frederick the Great :

"Potsdam, August 11th, 1749. My dear Minister of State, von Marschall. A certain Simonis asks in the enclosure for the

repayment of 150 taler, which he paid in 1746 into the Recruiting Fund for the post of assessor assigned to him in the Pomeranian Court of Sheriffs, for which he never received a salary. I beg you to let me have your report. I am, etc.”

Manfred's face assumed an expression of interrogation, and Herr v. W.-M. explained almost triumphantly: “You see how conscientiously the great King gave his attention to the smallest detail.”

Manfred: “The next document, No. 419, is perhaps more important. It is in French. Oh! Major de Chazot wants to build himself a country-seat, and Frederick the Great explains to him that the proposed piece of land is not for sale. Perhaps we shall have more luck with the next document, No. 420.”

Manfred read out: “‘His Majesty the King of Prussia forwards to you herewith the original text of the humble petition from the inhabitants of the towns of Stettin and Pyritz regarding the recent prohibition of brewing for home-consumption.’”

Manfred seemed disappointed, and suggested: “Suppose we go on to the next. Here is document No. 421: ‘His Majesty the King of Prussia has graciously resolved, in respect to the enclosed memorial of the Jew, Abraham Levi, that the latter shall pay for the privilege purchased from Major-General v. Schmettau not more than 50 taler recruiting money, 10 taler marriage certificate, and the other customary government fees, and graciously desires that you, the General-Director, shall take such further steps as are necessary for this purpose. Potsdam, August 23rd, 1749.’

“If this means that the fatherly care of the great King for his country extended even to the small Jewish traders, this important document will certainly delight all those who attribute the difficulties of West Prussian trade to the arbitrary expulsion by Frederick II. of 4000 West Prussian Jews (133), or who disapprove the action of Frederick II. in striking out the name of the philosopher, Mendelsohn from the list of those for election to the Academy. Is the next document equally fine, I wonder? Here anyhow is No. 422: ‘His Majesty, etc., herewith informs you of his gracious decision with reference to your very humble

report of the 23rd inst. regarding the 350 taler 12 groschen for building-stone supplied, which is demanded by the rifleman, Friedrich. . . .’ Let us pass on to No. 423, which appears to deal with foreign policy: ‘My dear Colonel v. Mütschell. It is quite right that, in accordance with your letter of the 25th, you should arrest Captain v. Keller of your regiment, who ordered on his own account, and without your previous knowledge, one non-commissioned officer and two men into Saxon territory; and his case must therefore be discussed after investigation by a sworn court martial. I am, etc. . . . Potsdam, August 28th, 1749.’ A little further! We shall surely find something suggestive of the great King. These documents were selected as specially characteristic of the nature and activities of the great King! Here is the following one, No. 424.”

Manfred read out the beginning of Document No. 424: “‘His Majesty, etc., informs you herewith in reference to Captain Grünberg, who asked to be allowed to shoot stags in the close season on his estate of Lippen situated on the Saxon frontier, of his most gracious decision: that Captain v. Grünberg is to be allowed to shoot in the close season any game which crosses the frontier from Saxony, but on the royal territory he must strictly observe the appointed close-season and breeding-season, in accordance with the edict. . . .’ Aha! that is truly the verdict of a king, almost of a Solomon! though not in the spirit of a sportsman or of a pan-German! I wonder if No. 425 displays the same royal cunning?”

Manfred read the beginning of document No. 425: “‘To the Head-Forester, v. Glöden, in Prussia. . . . The two lynx skins sent me on the . . . and also the 33 taler 8 groschen for the ten sold, have been duly received, and this is quite satisfactory. I am, etc. Potsdam, August 31st, 1749.’ It seems as if we couldn’t get away from the groschen. But wait, in the next document Frederick appears as the spiritual father of his provinces. Here in document No. 426 the King conveys his most gracious decision ‘to the mayor and council of the little town of Wilhelmsthal: . . . that, if your pastor has not returned, you may look about for another to conduct divine service for



you. Potsdam, August 31st, 1749.' Frederick the Great evidently had a feeling for religion! The *Collection of Documents* begins to be entertaining. The next document, No. 427, is concerned with the Prussian army; it runs as follows: 'His Majesty the King of Prussia, etc., communicates herewith to the Swiss citizen, Herrenschlund, in reply to his very humble petition of the 3rd inst., his most gracious decision: His Majesty is prepared to grant him a post in the excise or customs, when a vacancy arises, if, in accordance with his promise, he will deliver and present two good and satisfactory recruits. Potsdam, September 5th, 1749.' Forgive me, but that smacks of slave-dealing, so let us hurry on to the next. Here is document No. 428: 'My dear Lieutenant-General v. Bredow (Infantry). The widow Hartwichen, of Quedlinburg, complains that Lieutenant v. Kleist of your regiment persuaded her daughter by various illicit means to engage herself to him without her mother's knowledge, that v. Kleist has proclaimed this everywhere, and thereby prevented her daughter from accepting other advantageous proposals. As such an engagement is null and void, and I do not allow lieutenants to marry, nor consent to their betrothing themselves to persons of plebeian rank, you must punish Lieutenant v. Kleist for this conduct and inform him of my high displeasure. . . .' This royal interest no doubt saved the life of the lovesick Lieutenant v. Kleist. At any rate, it was not until ten years later, in the Seven Years' War, that Von Kleist, the distinguished poet of 'Spring,' whose verses met with no appreciation from Frederick II. because he was a German, met with his death, and then not by his own hand but by that of the enemy.

"When we find Frederick II., who wrote so much poetry and threatened suicide—in connection with his own marriage and other matters—concerning himself with a Lieutenant v. Kleist, we must read between the lines. It is an interesting fact that these von Kleists understand the art of writing poetry and dying and perhaps also of 'living for ever' even better than the great King, whose '*mourir en roi*' and whose alleged 'You scoundrels, do you want to live for ever?' are still admired at the present day?

"The old-maidish romanticism of this *Collection of Documents* is also quite remarkable. The next document is again concerned with a matrimonial affair. Here is No. 429: 'Your letter, in which you again ask for my consent to your proposed marriage with the Princess v. Holstein, has been handed to me. I cannot, however, grant your request, as I do not consider this marriage at all advantageous for you. . . .'

"The next document, No. 430, is again concerned with the important military affair of two recruits to be supplied by a Swiss, this time one Herrenschwandt. The King writes to his 'dear Colonel v. Natalis, Governor at Neuchâtel.' 'I wish you not only to lend a helping hand to the Swiss citizen, Herrenschwandt, but also, when he delivers these recruits to you, to receive them and to avail yourself of a favourable opportunity to transfer them to the nearest garrison for further transport.' In North America this was called 'underground slave-transport' before the wars for the abolition of slavery; but there the 'underground route' was a humane institution for the benefit of those slaves who wanted to save themselves by flight to Canada. The 'underground route' of Frederick the Great, on the other hand, was one of the inhuman instruments of a 'great' slave-owner.

"In the following document, No. 431, however, the King is no longer concerned with slave-smuggling, and appears as a patron of the arts. Here it is: 'His Majesty the King of Prussia, etc., in reference to the very humble memorial of the Concilii Professorum of the Gymnasium Academicum at Alt-Stettin, most graciously allows and consents that the same should celebrate the impending solemn speech-day with public music, and thereby distinguish itself from other schools. His Majesty hopes however . . . .'" Manfred controlled an obvious inclination to laugh, and continued: "Only imagine the enthusiastic delight which this act of royal favour must have provoked in the Gymnasium Academicum at Alt-Stettin. But this long document, No. 432, is much more serious. It is concerned with a rising in East Prussia. The King writes: 'Since it would almost appear as though the subjects had been tried beyond endurance and provoked to revolt, . . . But because

it is not fitting that the said subjects, even though they have been tried beyond endurance should for this reason stir up a rebellion, General Major v. Stosch has been instructed to arrest the ringleaders. . . .’ Perhaps Frederick the Great deserves yet another laurel wreath for the final stamping out of the peasants’ revolts ?

“The next three documents, Nos. 433 to 435, are again concerned with marriage. In document No. 433 the King informs Captain v. Burka, who has urgently begged for permission to marry, that ‘he must rid his mind entirely of these thoughts of marriage.’ On the other hand, in No. 434, he tells Grenadier Husfeld ‘that he may marry a certain Luise Rothenbergen, if it is true that she has 600 taler and that her total property amounts to 1000 taler.’ Less fortunate than this grenadier is ‘dear Captain v. Albe.’ The King writes to him sternly: ‘As you know only too well, I do not wish my officers to marry persons of plebeian rank, and I have already once refused my consent to your proposed marriage with the daughter of the bailiff, Meyerhoff. I am not a little surprised, therefore, that you should pester me yet again in your letter of the 11th. I hope that you will not trouble me any more with this matter, and that you will entirely abandon these ideas of marriage. I am, etc. Potsdam, Sept. 16th, 1749.’ That has a very ungracious sound. The bailiff’s daughter was possibly no less deserving than Minna von Barnhelm, but the letter of the actual King strikes a very different note from the stage-letter of the ‘very affectionate King,’ who as *deus ex machina* blessed the union of Major v. Tellheim and his Minna.

“And yet Lessing’s ‘affectionate King’ was by no means an invention. There was such a King, though he did not reveal himself as such to a German major and a German bailiff’s daughter. But on the same day on which the King destroyed the life’s happiness of a faithful officer, he wrote very affectionately to the Italian, Algarotti, who, as the friend of Voltaire and of Madame du Châtelet and as an international celebrity of the day, had other claims to good treatment than a Prussian captain and nobleman. Frederick II. maintained, it is true, that, ‘in my states a lieutenant counts for more than a chamberlain.’

But Frederick wrote to Algarotti, whom he had made a count and chamberlain, in very much more caressing tones than to the captain. Frederick wrote to his Italian chamberlain, Algarotti, who in his capacity of hired listener had—like Lucchesini later—been so bored in the service of Frederick II. that he fell ill and finally took refuge in flight, but whom Frederick was anxious to entice back: ‘*Je souhaite que vous ayez moins besoin de médecins que de maquereaux*’ (‘I hope that you may have less need of doctors than of panders’). And thereupon the talented monarch composed for the Italian a long poem on the joys of love. If this letter of Frederick II. to Algarotti were not included in the official publication of his *Œuvres*, might one not have mistaken its wisdom for that of a hairdresser’s apprentice? But the great King was not content with recommending panders to his escaped guest; he was even prepared to act as procurer himself, and he suggested to Baron Algarotti that he should come back and pay his addresses to Denis, the dancer at the Royal Opera House. I hope it will not grieve you to learn that Algarotti did come back, but soon after, in spite of the King’s zeal in the office of procurer (as the latter wrote to Wilhelmina on March 25th, 1755), ‘made off secretly’ and never came back. In much the same way Darget, Chazot, d’Arnaud and de Masson fled from the scorching rays of the royal favour. And Frederick II. wrote disconsolately to the escaped Darget at the end of February, 1754: ‘This winter was terrible. . . . I am more solitary than I like. Our company is all gone to the dogs. The fool (Voltaire) is in Switzerland; the Italian (Algarotti) has made off secretly; Maupertuis is ill in bed, and d’Argens has hurt his little finger.’

“On the other hand, it may cheer you to learn that not very long after the great King forbade the marriage of Captain von Albe with the bailiff’s daughter and recommended the dancer, Denis, and panders to Algarotti; the English ambassador reported to London (1773): ‘Berlin is a town where . . . there is neither *vir fortis* nec *femina casta*. A total corruption of morals reigns throughout both sexes . . . necessarily caused partly by the oppression of his present Majesty, etc., etc.’ ”

Herr v. W.-M. : " You, an American, will not be imposed upon by this English prudery."

Manfred answered with a laugh : " Aha, so you want to enkindle in me too the nationalist frenzy ? But it seems to me that the English ambassador meant much the same thing as Ernst Moritz Arndt, when he reproached Frederick II. with having everywhere ' crushed without mercy the tender buds of human sentiment '."

Herr v. W.-M. now explained to us in detail that Frederick's conduct was marked both by statesmanlike wisdom and worldly tact. I must confess that he did not quite succeed in convincing me.

The conversation reverted to the *Collection of Documents*.

Manfred let fall the book, from which he had read to us so entertainingly, and declared : " I cannot acquire a taste for this collection of documents. The King, who tirelessly poured out this rubbish every day, reminds me too much of that over-zealous King George, of England and Hanover. In Prussia people persist in admiring this type. In England no one, above all no nobleman, has taken it very seriously, and the American farmers made short work of it. The great English statesmen paraded their over-zealous King, or put him back in the box of marionettes, according to their need and for great or little ends, much as Bismarck dragged out his old Emperor by the sword-belt, according to need. I fail to believe that England and America would have attained to their present position in the world, if their people had allowed themselves to be intimidated or impressed by the busy officiousness of a Frederick II."

Herr v. W.-M., whose various comments while Manfred was reading from the *Collection of Documents*, have not been reproduced up to now here intervened : " In your sweeping American fashion you pass rather too lightly over the innumerable everyday difficulties with which little Prussia had to contend. In these circumstances the indefatigable and meticulous labour of Frederick the Great was indispensable and therefore supremely important."

Manfred : " What the documents have just told us of

Frederick the Great's meticulous labour seems to me, too, very important, and in particular because it has given me a new idea of the matters which engaged the King's attention during the one or two hours that he sacrificed each morning to the business of government."

Herr v. W.-M. : "Do you realise that Frederick did not himself compose the documents which you have just read out, but merely gave the requisite instructions? So that there remained a good deal of time for more important matters."

Manfred : "From the comparatively good German of the documents I had already assumed that they were not the work of the highly cultured King of Prussia, who by his own admission only spoke German 'like a coachman,' but that they must have been penned by some less cultured but German clerical minion. So that, out of the brief hours devoted to government, there remained time for Frederick to deal with more important matters. He wrote or drafted innumerable memoirs on matters which it was impossible that he should understand, because he had wasted the time in which he might have become acquainted with them in declaiming Voltaire. He also wrote the notorious testaments, which Bismarck wanted to keep permanently secret. And he wrote or drafted in detail the letters to his ambassadors in foreign countries (whom he dubbed 'postmen'), and so, by his brilliant intrigues, welded together the European continent into an alliance against Prussia. No one was more astonished than himself to note what he had managed to get through in these brief but regular morning hours. 'In one minute His Majesty reads at least ten letters, and answers them right away, without reading them a second time,' wrote de Catt on October 11, 1758, in his *Diary*.

"But even to these larger European politics, with which he was so intoxicated, the King did not, at any rate to judge by the time which he devoted to them, attribute anything like as much importance as to his royal patronage of the arts and sciences, that is to say, to his scribbling, his music (he composed over a hundred musical works—some of them very pretty), and his correspondence with those Frenchmen in whose world-wide scientific or artistic fame he was anxious to play a part. The

key to the understanding of the great King of Prussia seems to me to lie in the not yet sufficiently appreciated fact that Frederick II. took himself seriously: as historian, as poet, and as musician. And if much scribbling is worthy of honour, then Frederick certainly deserves to be called the Great. Professor G. B. Volz has proved that most of the historical works composed by Frederick II. in emulation of Caesar were rewritten by the King several times and transcribed by his own hand. (At least Caesar wrote in his mother-tongue, and renounced the already 'cultured language,' at that time Greek. Frederick was incapable of such heroic renunciation.) And Frederick II. worked even more industriously at his poetry than at his historical works. Though the King often modestly ridiculed his poetic ambition, this did not prevent him from rewriting his poems twice, three times, five times—no, eight times, and perhaps even more. 'I want my poem to be safe against present and future judges of the art,' Frederick II. once remarked to de Catt in explanation of these constant rewritings. While his soldiers were plundering and burning before his eyes, Frederick was tirelessly writing verses, and continually furnishing his reader with fresh evidence of his childish self-admiration: 'Do you not think that my verses have something of the easy flow of Racine's? *Delectat sua opera cum ardore inextinguibili.*' 'Do you think that my *Salomo* can be ranked with that of Voltaire?'

"No doubt it is only because not all the versions of the poems were written on the back of extant State papers that it is not possible to prove that every Frederician poem was rewritten in eight different versions, as can be proved of the Frederician poem in praise of Louis XIV." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the *Hohenzollern Yearbook*, 1916, Professor G. B. Volz—probably by way of inspiring the troops then on active service, furnished evidence of the untiring perseverance of Frederick the Great by publishing the eight versions of his poem in praise of Louis XIV. In this connection Volz wrote enthusiastically: "Here we see the creative artist at his work!" The last of the eight versions includes the following words, which are far from applicable to the universally avoided King of Prussia:

*Louis à sa couronne ajouta ce fleuron,  
Il eut tout à la fois Tércence, Cécéron,  
Sophocle, Euclide, Horace, Anacréon, Salluste.  
Et l'on revit les jours d'Alexandre et d'Auguste.*

Herr v. W.-M.: "I fancy you are exaggerating there. The King's glorious poem before the Battle of Rossbach, his inflexible:

*penser, vivre et mourir en roi.*

That he certainly did not have to rewrite eight times. That was the inspiration of a creative mind in a great hour!"

Manfred: "You may quite possibly be right there. Frederick may have felt it unnecessary to rewrite this poem eight times, because the great Racine had done the preliminary creative work for him. In Racine's *Athalie* which the great Frederick justly ranked higher than the achievements of the Seven Years' War, the loyal High Priest concludes his appeal on behalf of the young king with the oft-quoted summons:

*De vivre, de combattre, et de mourir pour lui.*

"And the King is himself admonished by this worthy priest with the words:

*Et périssez du moins en roi, s'il faut périr.*

"Frederick II., as we know, did not take this admonition too seriously either before Maxen, when he made his humble peace offers, or after Maxen, when he proposed to withdraw into private life, but while adhering to the mood and cadence of Racine, he may perhaps have executed his free paraphrase without much rewriting. His brother Henry, however, declares that the poems 'on the eve of a great battle,' had in fact been composed by the industrious king long before, and Bismarck's ridicule of them suggests that he too did not reckon them among the indisputable proofs of Frederician greatness.

"I am constantly astonished at the profound resemblance between men who know how to think objectively, men like Goethe, Voltaire or Bismarck. Goethe's greatest triumph is that he overcame his less fruitful passion for painting, in order that he might become a more absolute master of the pen. Frederick II., from his earliest youth to the time of his death, in war even more than in peace, was a slave to his unfruitful craving to be a writer and musician, to which he sacrificed such



an immoderate amount of time that he seems to me to have forfeited the claim to be a great absolute monarch. He lacked the power to think objectively. He was a sentimentalist, and consequently merited the ridicule of great realists like Voltaire and Bismarck.

"Bismarck neither during nor after his wars had time for daily concerts, poetry-writing and useless insults to powerful neighbours, and it seems to me that he judged Frederick II.'s achievements in these spheres very much as did Voltaire. Moreover, the measure of 'seemliness,' in Goethe's sense of the term, observed by Voltaire in his letters to Frederick II., seems to me astonishingly generous, for, after all, Voltaire was not a royal Prussian minister, but merely a chamberlain who had fled, or—if you like—been insultingly dismissed. All the same I believe that Voltaire, despite the fact that he was Frederick's instructor in good tone, and was admired by Goethe himself for his courtly tone, yet had not such a just notion of what was seemly as had Goethe."

This sounded rather inconsistent. At my request, Manfred explained his view as follows :

"The 'distinguished tone' and 'fine tact' for which Voltaire was praised by Frederick II., and the 'seemliness' and 'courtly tone' for which he was praised by Goethe, were useful and admirable, but only for intercourse with upstarts and petty princes, not for intercourse with kings in the highest sense of the word. There was a better tone than Voltaire's tone, and Goethe knew it. Voltaire's sense of seemliness was good enough for sovereigns like 'Catherine and Frederick the Great, . . . Henry of Prussia' and others, whom Goethe names. They all, as Goethe expresses it, 'admitted themselves the vassals of Voltaire,' and the impertinences of Voltaire, which Goethe does not approve, were admired by them. In their judgment good tone was simply Voltaire's tone. What else should they know of good tone? Take, for example, Frederick and Henry of Prussia. The impressions of their paternal home may have given them some notion of the inside of a madhouse, but could hardly have given them a notion of good tone. Lavissee, who was able to examine certain unpublished French court archives,

declares that already when he was a fourteen year old crown prince, Frederick was regarded ‘in Versailles almost as a child of the house,’ but the conspiracies of the boy against his own father show that he was rendered all the more crazy by the crumbs which fell to him from Versailles through the agency of the French ambassador.

“ Frederick’s essay entitled ‘*Manière de vivre d’un prince de grande maison*,’ written at the age of twelve, and his signature, ‘*Frédéric le Philosophe*,’<sup>1</sup> at the age of fifteen may not appear any more childish than the French letters which Goethe wrote as a child. But Goethe grew up and created for himself his own good tone. The difference between the development of Goethe and of Frederick II. is strikingly exemplified in the manner in which the two of them shortly before their death spoke of ‘*Götz von Berlichingen*.’ Goethe could boast to the French-Swiss, Sorcet, that he had never hankered after the approval of the French, and that, in spite of many excellent qualities, the new French literature, ‘*dans le fond n’est que le reflet de ce qui est devenu la littérature allemande depuis cinquante ans. Ainsi, le genre des comédies historiques tout-à-fait nouvelles chez les Français se trouve déposé dans mon Goetz depuis un demi-siècle.*’ In contrast to Goethe, Frederick II. always hankered after the approval of the French. He never really got past the stage of mental development in which as a boy he wrote his ‘*Manière de vivre*,’ and, after he had all his life long composed French essays, which were suggested by Voltaire, and had to be corrected by Voltaire or other Frenchmen, ill-luck determined that his literary career should close with the ill-mannered attack on *Götz*, a play of which Goethe could boast that it achieved in France a success never attained by any of the King’s French compositions.

“ Concerning Shakespeare’s plays and Goethe’s *Götz*, the sage of Sanssouci wrote in his *dissertation*: ‘How can such a vile mixture of the vulgar and the sublime, of buffoonery and tragedy, excite either pleasure or emotion! One must forgive Shakespeare this eccentricity and extravagance, for the age that witnesses the birth (!) of the arts is not the age of their greatest

<sup>1</sup> Later he abbreviated his name to *Frederic*.

perfection. But now there appears on our stage a Götz von Berlichingen, a vile imitation of these bad English plays, and the groundlings clap their hands, and call enthusiastically for a repetition of these loathesome platitudes.' Thus wrote Frederick II., in the erroneous belief that he had his teacher, Voltaire, behind him.

"Certainly many 'loathesome platitudes' were written round about 1780, and not only by Frederick II. himself. But it needed a truly Frederician skill out of innumerable platitudes to hit upon Goethe's *Götz* as the vilest. And Frederick showed equal discernment in his criticism of German hymns. In the time of Frederick there were plenty of even worse hymns than there are now, and much dreadful trash about 'miserable sinners' and so forth. But Frederick's fine literary taste selected as the special object of his hectoring abuse Paul Gerhardt's most sublime work, and, on the eightieth anniversary of the elevation of Prussia to a kingdom, wrote with his own hand the following appreciation of this immortal poem: 'Every one is free to sing *Nun ruhen alle Wälder* or other such stupid, senseless stuff.' Enraptured with the freedom here granted, Preuss wrote (134): 'The royal comments here reproduced bear witness to the most sublime independence of judgment in the occupant of the throne'; whereas Lessing, who was not so enthusiastic, but to-day provokes far more enthusiasm, felt only a profound contempt for this Frederician 'freedom'."

"The fact that Voltaire's tone pleased the great Frederick so greatly is above all due to the fact that he did not know any better and that his own was far worse. He could not have any understanding of human and royal dignity, because he had no experience of good society, and further—and this is specially important here—because he was incapable of conceiving any dignified relation between an absolute monarch and those about him. Certainly he had not derived any such conception from his father, who used to fall upon his subjects in the street and flog them with his crutch-stick, shouting: 'You must love, love, not fear me.' What relation, on the other hand, could be more difficult and—more delicate than that between cultured men and the representative of absolute power?

"From Goethe's utterances one might compile an invaluable book, which should bear the title: 'On Intercourse with Earthly Sovereigns, written by the Supreme Sovereign of the Mind.' The following two remarks by Goethe seem to me to exhibit clearly the contrast between his view and that of Voltaire. Goethe spoke of Voltaire's 'short poems addressed to individuals,' and said: 'They are unquestionably among the most delightful things that he ever wrote. There is not a line of them that is not replete with wit, clearness, mirth and grace.' 'And in them,' said Eckermann, 'one may perceive his relations with the great and the mighty, and note with satisfaction what a distinguished rôle Voltaire plays among them: he seems to have felt himself equal to the highest, and there is no indication that the free play of his wit was ever hampered by any royal personage.' 'Yes,' said Goethe, 'he was distinguished. And, with all his freedom and audacity, he always knew how to keep within the bounds of decorum, which is saying almost more. I can cite the Empress of Austria as an authority on such matters; I heard her remark very often that in Voltaire's poems to royal personages never did he by a hair transgress the bounds of decorum.' "

Manfred continued with an air almost of embarrassment: "Goethe's words in no way contradict my theory. Listen to some more. Another time Goethe said to Eckermann: 'Any one who, like myself, has all his life had intercourse with persons of high rank, does not find it difficult. The only thing to be remembered is that, one must not allow oneself absolute human freedom, but must keep within the bounds of a certain decorum.' This contrast between Voltaire's sense of being 'equal to the highest' and Goethe's 'not allow oneself absolute human freedom' was on another occasion expressed by Goethe in the words: 'If he (a Prussian poet, Hiller) seems to himself a little king in the presence of a great king, if he finds consolation in gazing for a quarter of an hour at a time into the fair eyes of the amiable queen, he is not to be rebuked but rather praised for this. But a true poet would have felt quite otherwise in the presence of majesty; he would have divined the incomparable worth, the unattainable dignity, the vast power inherent in the

tranquil personality of a monarch as compared with a private individual. A single glance from such eyes would have sufficed him, and his emotion would have been such that his whole life would have lost itself in a noble hymn.' That may sound exaggerated; and yet how true, how noble and human it seems, if one bears in mind that at that time on the continent there were still absolute sovereigns, although Fichte had long since proved convincingly that their first duty was to cease to exist as such ! "

"Moreover Goethe himself experienced very profoundly the 'incomparable worth' of a monarch, even when this monarch was not a Napoleon or Empress Ludovica, but King of Bavaria (and of Lola) : 'It is no small thing,' he said, 'to experience the great impression made by the presence of a king, and to be inwardly equal to it. It is hard to maintain self-control and not grow dizzy.' Voltaire had no such attacks of dizziness; partly because he had swum more in the stream of the world, partly because he had less sense of reverence than Goethe; partly because he held in his hand the rod with which absolute sovereigns could be kept in check. Voltaire had, it is true, called upon the world to admire the great Louis; but the struggle of his life had been above all against the excesses of worldly and ecclesiastical tyranny, and so he had come to regard the lords of the earth chiefly as 'good-for-nothings.' Voltaire, therefore, had little desire 'to feel himself equal to the highest,' and his capacity for treating them as 'good-for-nothings' was bound to leave him in the lurch, as soon as he had to do with a real 'highest,' with a real king, instead of with people who were, like Frederick II., intellectually dependent on him, or, like Catherine of Russia, regarded him as an influential father confessor, whose forgiveness of real or pretended sins would help to safeguard a throne none too scrupulously acquired. Compared with these vassals of Voltaire, Louis XV., whom Voltaire spoke of as 'my King,' was a 'highest,' sitting on his own throne, and independent of Voltaire as regards both power and education. More than that, Louis XV. was seated on the throne of the great Louis.

## THE SUPERIORITY OF LOUIS XV. OVER FREDERICK THE GREAT

“Nothing could be more fascinating than a comparison between Frederick II., who, with the aid of Voltaire, was able to mount to the summit of royal fame, and Louis XV., who had to descend from the summit of royal splendour and intellectual supremacy, and this in part because he did not succeed in concluding with the intellectual leaders of his nation, above all with Voltaire, that alliance without which a great national monarchy is inconceivable. Louis XV. was invested with the glamour that surrounded the revered memory of the Roi-Soleil; his people for a long time adored him as the ‘well-beloved,’ and his court was the idolatrously worshipped source of great traditions and of ‘good tone,’ from which all Europe aspired to draw. From this source only those favoured by the King and by fortune could draw directly, but its precious water was handed on to the thirsting masses of the less fortunate by all kinds of persons, qualified and unqualified. The fact that Voltaire, the prophet of Louis XIV., had succeeded in establishing himself as one of the qualified, was one of the secrets of his success with his vassals. But Frederick II. was mistaken when, in his *Eloge de Voltaire*, he declared, as he had heard from his master, that : ‘*le brillant d’une grande cour n’offusqua pas ses yeux au point de lui faire préférer la splendeur de Versailles à la retraite de Cirey.*’ On the contrary, Voltaire was sufficiently a man of the world, a Frenchman and a patriot, to long passionately for the service of his King, and he only retired to Madame du Châtelet’s country-seat, after he had blundered at Versailles. On the other hand, he by no means longed for the court of Frederick the Great, whose ‘greatness’ and whose pressing invitations only attracted him when the death of Madame du Châtelet had rendered him homeless, that is to say, ten years after the King of Prussia had resolved ‘to make his capital a temple of great men.’ Frederick said himself that Voltaire’s sojourn in Berlin was only a last resort.

“That Voltaire, in spite of his serious endeavours, should

not have succeeded in gaining a firm footing at Versailles is astounding by reason both of his famous ingenuity and of the fact that he had very influential friends. Not only Richelieu, the man of the world, and Argenson, the minister, who was revolving great plans for political reforms, and many others, were closely in sympathy with the personality and aspirations of the poet-philosopher, but Madame de Pompadour too did all<sup>66</sup> in her power to make Voltaire—who belonged at that time to the crowd of artists who extolled her—acceptable to the King. A great deal has been written about Voltaire's failure, but it seems beyond doubt that Louis XV. found Frederick II.'s idol unbearable."

Of the many protests made against Manfred's remarks in the course of the conversation, I will mention only one, which was made by Thomas Mann at this point.

Thomas Mann: "If I am not mistaken, Goethe says, when he is speaking of 'Voltaire's vassals': 'The fact that Joseph II. held aloof from Voltaire hardly redounded to the honour of this prince; for it would have done no harm to him or his undertakings if, with such a fine understanding and disposition, he had combined a better appreciation of the products of the mind.'"

Manfred: "A great deal might be said about that. The more so since Frederick II., on September 16, 1770, expressed his admiration for Joseph II., and specially mentioned that Joseph knew how to read and appreciate Voltaire's works; the more also since Joseph's most serious failing was perhaps his admiration for Voltaire's wit as recoined in the Frederician mint; the more so, last of all, since Maria Theresa (24, ix. 1766) still called her son, when he was twenty-five years of age a 'coquette of the mind'."

Thomas Mann: "But supposing that Goethe is not mistaken when he defends the wit, would not his remark be applicable to Louis XV.?"

Manfred: "The comparison between Louis and Joseph is certainly so far justified that the son of Maria Theresa, a German Empress in the highest sense of the word, was not one of those who had to usurp their power and dignity, as did

Frederick II. and the other 'vassals of Voltaire.' If Joseph, who gave the Germans their finest theatre (the Burgtheater), and who, on his travels, always wore the Werther costume, had possessed a little more of that wit, which Goethe none the less finds lacking in him, this emperor would have had at his disposal a splendid throng of German heroes of the mind.

\* "These great ones, whom Frederick II. had driven from his side, in order—as Klopstock says mockingly—'to stammer in a foreign tongue,' hoped with Herder that the Emperor Joseph II. would give them 'a German fatherland, a German law, a beautiful language and an honest religion.' A German nation in the lofty sense of the word might still at that time have been brought into being. Lessing and—later—Goethe would gladly have come to Vienna, and with these, and with Klopstock and Herder and other pioneers of an independent German intellectual life, Joseph II. might have quite well dispensed with any 'wit' of Voltaire's minting. If, on the other hand, fate designed that Louis XV. should try to dispense with Voltaire, the blame for this must be ascribed not to the King alone, but also to a large extent to Voltaire, and to the fact that Voltaire's tone and tact, which won enthusiastic appreciation in *Sans-souci*, were not really good enough for Versailles. I claim to be an admirer of Voltaire's intellectual powers, even though I regard Frederick II.'s attempt to establish him the sole and supreme intellectual sovereign of Germany as evidence of deplorable shortsightedness and mental poverty.

"An admirer of Voltaire might, of course, say that mental poverty was the cause of the distaste experienced by Louis XV., when Madame de Pompadour tried to introduce into his presence the most distinguished of her intellectual friends—Voltaire, Cr billon, Montesquieu, Marmontel; she also protected Rousseau and others, not to speak of the host of talented painters, sculptors and architects, whom she collected round her, and treated with the most delicate sympathy, while Frederick II. was quarrelling with his great writers and driving his architects to imprisonment or the grave. But it was not merely mental poverty that was at the root of Louis' distaste; it was, I believe—however absurd it may sound—also to some extent



mental superiority ; nay, I will venture even further ; it was, in a certain sense, moral superiority."

"Of Louis XV. ? Really ! Over whom ?"

"Well, if you like, over Voltaire, and in particular, over Frederick the Great !"

After the merriment excited by Manfred's notion that Louis XV. could be ranked morally above Voltaire and Frederick II. had subsided, Manfred defended his position with considerable spirit somewhat as follows : "Royal 'greatness,' as conceived in association with Frederick II., is something that I would not insult Louis XV. by imputing to him. Louis XV. did not, like Frederick II., flee from his first battle in a state of hopeless agitation ; on the contrary, his royal firmness made the victory of Fontenoy secure at a moment when the issue was trembling in the balance. Louis XV. did not boast of his conduct in this battle, as Frederick II. was foolish enough to boast to the French ambassador of his exploits at the Battle of Mollwitz. Louis XV. was not such a pedant as to fancy that, because he had won a battle, he must make the shedding of blood his occupation in life. Louis XV. never passed indiscriminating judgment on matters of which he knew nothing, as Frederick delighted to do. Louis XV. did not take pleasure in mocking at things which others hold sacred, as Frederick II., even in his old age, could not refrain from doing, though he was rebuked for it by such men as Zieten. Louis XV. had none of that pert assurance with which Frederick II. liked to pronounce judgment upon men and things. On the contrary, Louis XV., like the great Louis, and like Goethe too, was frequently, even in his riper years, overcome by that almost boyish modesty, frequently found in men whose vision penetrates beyond the surface of apparently simple things ; that modesty which a wise man must above all manage to acquire, when, by the accident of his birth or talents, he is thrust into a position of high responsibility or invested with the romantic glamour of absolute sovereignty. Louis XV. does not appear to have been ill-mannered or uncontrolled, in the sense in which these epithets apply to Frederick II. Louis XV. never sank to the childishly blind and unquestioning admiration of Louis XIV.

and his despotism experienced by Frederick II. Louis XV., whose keen intelligence recent historians have revealed, perceived the frightful difficulties to which this despotism had given rise in his own country, with its high intellectual culture. While Frederick II. heedlessly sowed these difficulties in the country of his flogged and docile Prussians, Louis XV. all through his life made very noteworthy endeavours to infuse new life into French parliamentarism, which had been either destroyed or forced into mistaken channels. At the same time he was shrewd enough to realise the futility of trying to breathe life into a corpse, and intelligent enough to be utterly bored with the hopeless presumption of the position into which he had been born. Now that the old secret archives have been published, we know that Louis XV. maintained a wonderful political news-service, and often allowed ministers who had won his confidence to have their way, even when he did not share their views, and when, as is clear to-day, the King was better informed than his minister. Unlike Frederick II., Louis XV. could both hold his tongue and be in doubt. Louis XV., whose life is seen on careful investigation to have been not only a long struggle against the Jesuits, but also a struggle on behalf of the revival of parliamentary government and against its excesses, has been made a bogey of by the Jesuits and revolutionaries. The falseness and absurdity of this caricature is only surpassed by that of the attempt to canonise Frederick II. Louis XV. was moreover the handsomest man and the most perfect nobleman in France. Not one discourteous word from his lips has been recorded; he was loved by many women, including many who deserve to be called queens. Louis XV. was not impotent. The legitimate queen of France, who was seven years older than Louis XV., bore him ten children. Even after this he still preserved youthful vigour, and, since the five Comtesses de Nesle had died, and his relations with Madame de Pompadour had been transformed into such a sublime friendship as would have enchanted Frau von Stein; since, moreover, he was conscious of the obligations of kings and philosophers towards '*amor feminarum plerumque officiosus*' (as Goethe called it), he had a lying-in hospital attached to his country-residences.

In short, this Louis XV., if he had further been endowed with the wisdom and practical energy of a Bismarck, would have possessed all the virtues of the Emperor William I., and he therefore seems to me validly entitled to claim kingly greatness, though happily not of the Frederician order. If he was not spoken of as 'great,' this was because he was a martyr, a martyr to that despotism which he had not created, but for whose perilous and fatal presumption revenge was taken upon this innocent victim. I need hardly mention that Frederick II. himself spoke of Louis XV. after his death as 'good' and 'honest,' and wrote that 'Louis XV.'s surname, the "Well-beloved," is worth more than the surname, "the Saint" and "the Great," which kings owe only to flattery and seldom to truth.' With equal justice Frederick II. declared (135) that Louis XV. 'had only one fault, namely, that of being king.'

Manfred looked at us with an expression of smiling interrogation. Thomas Mann seemed thoughtful; finally he outdid Manfred with the following audacious sally: "I should like to modify one of my remarks concerning Frederick the Great, so as to apply it to Louis XV., and ask: 'Was this Louis XV. so fond of women because he was such a good man, or was he such a good man because he was so fond of women?' This is an insoluble problem. The mysteries of sex are profound, and will never be completely unravelled."

Manfred: "Very well, let us leave these mysteries. I am glad that you approve my defence of Louis XV., and, by way of explaining the caricature of this great King that has been circulated in Germany and contrasted with the idealised portrait of Frederick II., I should like to refer here to the remarkable inefficiency of German historians and to the fraudulency of the so-called historic method. Hans Delbrück admitted this fraudulency, and remarked very truly: 'Who dare assert that the majority of the learned historical writers of the present day have such knowledge of the true nature of political, diplomatic, ecclesiastical, economic, military, administrative and commercial events as is requisite for trustworthy and expert criticism?' A humorous anthropologist, who in the capacity of an 'exchange professor' had become familiar with Berlin, once

gave me the following answer to Delbrück's interrogation : ' No one dare so assert who has discovered that even in the twentieth century Prussian men of learning are so lacking in any refinement of manners that out of patriotic zeal they not infrequently emulate those interminable repasts with which Frederick the Great used to ruin his digestion, and which I have only found elsewhere among certain degenerate branches of the Ethiopian race ; they call it ' giving dinner parties.' But, joking apart, pray call to mind the convincing evidence of Treitschke's defective knowledge of sociology adduced by Gustav Schmoller in his ' Open Letter to Professor Dr. Heinrich von Treitschke.' (136) And remember that this von Treitschke, whose ignorance of sociology is so ruthlessly exposed by Schmoller, won the smirking approbation of half-educated Berlin scholars by assuring the youth of Germany of the intellectual superiority of Frederick II. and declared : ' Even more than in the age of Frederick the Great is it true to-day that the freedom of the human race is taking refuge behind our standards '."

Hegemann : " In your flattering description of the great Louis you made no mention of the criminal extravagance, in respect of which this French king compares so unfavourably with the spartan frugality of the great King of Prussia."

Manfred : " It would be unjust to Louis XV. to compare his so-called extravagance with the so-called frugality of Frederick II. Louis's expenditure was for cultural ends of supreme international importance ; while as regards Frederick's expenditure—listen to what the great King says of it himself. He told Lucchesini that it was by way of ' fanfaronnade,' mere swagger, that immediately after the conclusion of the Seven Years' War he built his New Palace ; that is to say, extorted uncounted millions from his devastated country—and devastated by whose fault ?—in order to build a gigantic palace, which he was incapable of filling with magnificent evidence of taste and judgment in the manner of the admired Roi-Soleil ; a palace, in fact, which was quite unneeded, for in addition to the castle at Berlin, there was the castle at Potsdam, which had been rebuilt at great cost, and Sanssouci, which had been completed in 1747. According to Manger's *Architectural History of Potsdam*, the

accounts for the building of the New Palace, not including any internal furnishings, amount to 2,880,443 taler. According to an estimate quoted by Preuss, (137) the total costs amounted to '11 million taler and as much again for the furnishing.' This would represent in present-day currency an expenditure of some 50-100 million marks. The drilling ground behind the New Palace is very pretty, one of the finest and most costly examples of stage decoration that has ever been executed in solid stone. But the castle itself is so crammed outside and inside with evidences of lack of taste that, if it were to disappear, this could hardly be called a great disaster, and might even be accounted desirable for the sake of Frederick II.'s reputation. Those 'too large and too grimacing angels' heads' (as Professor Pniower describes them) with which the uppermost storey is laden, were referred to—as well as the 'too-churlish porter' (whom Manger too mentions in 1787)—by Goethe in his *Berlin Diary*, which only runs to about two hundred words.

"The construction of this huge palace from the resources of the utterly exhausted country seems at the present day a crime, especially when one considers that Prussia lacked the most necessary things. The King complained repeatedly that he had no money with which to provide for his disabled soldiers or establish foundling hospitals. As a means of providing for his disabled soldiers, some of them who could neither read nor write were given positions as teachers in the national schools. Preuss (138) even reports that 'disabled sergeants and other non-commissioned officers, without much regard to capacity, were thrust into the municipal bodies as mayors, treasurers, councillors, and the like.' Schmoller calls this: 'splendid and intelligent consideration for culture.'

"The frightful consequences of Frederick's peculiar frugality are evident from two pieces of information which the King vouchsafed to Lucchesini. On March 31, 1781, Lucchesini writes in his record of the King's mid-day meal: 'The King has appointed in Prussia (East Prussia) 200 teachers, who cost him annually 22,000 taler and firewood.' And at the mid-day meal on October 4, 1780, which lasted five-and-a-half hours, the King complained 'of the large number of child-murders.'

In Prussia (East Prussia) alone, there were almost fifty annually out of its population of 850,000 souls. That is to say, to every teacher with an annual salary of 110 taler there were over 4000 souls and how many child-murders? However, Frederick the Great seems to have derived pleasure from the 'fanfaronnade' of the New Palace. It must have pleased him that foreign visitors, as for instance in 1772, Harris, the guest of Lord Marshal Keith, who had just arrived from Spain, declared the New Palace to be more magnificent than the famous buildings of the Escorial. Indeed, the frontage of the Escorial, including palace, monastery and church, measures a total of 206 metres, and Philip II., with the resources of the new world to draw upon, could perhaps permit himself this lordly expenditure. But the frontage of the New Palace measures 213 metres, and the builder of it, who was drawing upon the resources of a terribly impoverished and afflicted country, has earned the reputation of spartan frugality."

Hegemann: "I cannot find fault with Frederick's vast expenditure on his new palace, because I know that he was at the same time displaying the most noble consideration for the welfare of his devastated country."

Manfred: "Do you know that? Do you know what this country looked like after the Seven Years' War? Permit me to read you a passage from Frederick's own description (139): 'One has to picture to one's self whole districts so devastated that hardly a trace of the former dwellings was to be discovered, towns, in which not one stone was left standing on another, others half-consumed by fire, 13,000 houses, of which not a vestige remained, fields unsown, the people without corn for bread, 60,000 horses lost by the farmers, and, as compared with 1757, a reduction of the population by 500,000 souls, which is a great deal out of a total number of 4,500,000, etc. etc.'"

"In this devastated land the King engages in his alleged splendid promotion of culture. Here is an instance quoted by Preuss. (140) The financial councillor, Roden, an ardent admirer of Frederick II., tells us in his autobiography how the great King arrived at Wesel on June 6, 1763, at 11 o'clock in the morning, and exclaimed: 'Listen, a large number of

houses have been destroyed through the war ; I want them to be restored, for which purpose I intend to give the money to those towns which cannot help themselves, in particular, Soest, Hamm, Lünen and Wesel, as these have suffered most. I want you to let me have an exact list of these towns. . . . It must be ready within six days.' The financial councillor, Roden, despatched couriers to obtain information from the devastated towns, and, after six days, handed in a report. Roden continued : ' His Majesty read it through carefully, expressed his satisfaction, and decided to give 25,000 taler towards the rebuilding.' That was for four towns, that is to say, 6000 taler for each of the towns that had suffered most. And Roden was shortly after appointed privy financial councillor. Are you quite sure that one or two of the millions expended on the New Palace might not have been employed with greater advantage to the national economy ? "

Hegemann : " You yourself pointed out that Frederick distributed very little relief money in the western provinces, because he wanted to get rid of them. You must consider the eastern provinces."

Manfred : " Pray consider the whole of Prussia as far as I am concerned. In 1788, Büsching, a member of the supreme consistorial court, referred with stupefied reverence to the accounts published at that time by Frederick's collaborator and admirer, Count Herzberg. According to these, Frederick II., in the period from 1763-1786, had given to the provinces damaged by the Seven Years' War and to all the other provinces a total of 24,390,000 taler, that is to say, only a little over a million a year, and this for the whole kingdom, out of which he was at the same time extorting many millions for his new Escorial. Frugality ? Or senseless extravagance ?

" Or is one to assume that the construction of the New Palace had some sort of importance for the development of art in Europe or in the Prussian nation, like Frederick II.'s passion for a too lavish display of diamonds, thanks to which he left behind him 300 snuff-boxes studded with large stones, and similar objects set with brilliants, representing a value of 1,750,000 taler. The Prince de Ligne, who tried to say polite

things about Frederick, but who was familiar with the great courts, cannot refrain from mockery when he relates 'how the king often played the king, and how magnificent he felt himself when he took in his hand a stick and a snuff-box covered with horrible diamonds.' Nicolai, who was filled both with zeal for truth and admiration for Frederick, describes a frequent and characteristically Frederician spectacle: 'When the King journeyed to Berlin for the Carnival, after the Seven Years' War . . . he usually spent most of his time in his apartments; he used to take with him a considerable number of these boxes in two cases, which an Arabian camel or dromedary usually conveyed to Berlin.' (141) Frederick's camel loaded with his diamond-studded snuff-boxes—a proud reminiscence of the days of friendship with the great Tsar, Peter III.—is indeed an imperishable emblem of supreme Prussian royal dignity!

"Quite in harmony with this mentality is the delusion cherished by Frederick II. that the silk-worm could be bred in Prussia as it was in Italy and the South of France (there are still at the present day a few gnarled remains of those 20,000 Potsdam mulberry trees procured at great cost, the tending of which was for many years one of the most odious duties of the Potsdam orphan boys); or Frederick II.'s notion that he was doing a service to the industry of his country by farming the 230 girls from the military orphanage for nine years to the lace-industry introduced from France (a procedure called slavery in America and long since forbidden by law). It is really amusing to compare these Prussian achievements with the French, as incautious admirers of Frederick II. sometimes do. In France one finds that triumphal exuberance of luxury-industries engendered by the seemingly inexhaustible wealth of a country secure from hostile invasions and directed by the most cultured men of a highly artistic age. Whether Frederick's New Palace was built or not seems, so far as I can judge, quite without significance for the artistic history of Europe. But the construction of the castles of Madame de Pompadour, and the holding of those great competitions which resulted in the Place Louis XV. (now Place de la Concorde) were of supreme importance for the development of the artistic taste of the world.



If the New Palace at Potsdam were to disappear, nothing would be lost, but the fact that those charming little castles erected by Madame de Pompadour, with the aid of a host of gifted artists, for Louis XV. (not for herself) were destroyed in the Revolution was a serious loss which can never be repaired. But even though these brilliant works of the queen of pre-classicism themselves disappeared, they none the less survive in numberless imitations and in a stream of creative activity, which benefited the whole artistic life of Europe, and among other things, furnished the inspiration for all that is admirable in the internal decorations of the Frederician castles. Even Frederick's successor, in spite of his mania for all things German, drew from the same source, and, according to Malmesbury, always had a lackey on the road to Paris. What would have become of Goethe's rococo, and of the clothing and environment of Goethe's Lotte, without the artistic impulse from Paris?

"It seems to me ridiculous to find, on comparing Pierre de Nolhac's (142) trustworthy estimate of the expenses of Madame de Pompadour with the expenses of Frederick the Great, that Madame de Pompadour in twenty years expended for her numerous little architectural creations six-and-a-half to seven-and-a-half million francs, that is to say, considerably less than Frederick II. expended on his New Palace alone. Manger calculates 10,573,000 taler as Frederick's demonstrable expenditure for the actual buildings in Potsdam, the bulk of which is for the castles and gardens. Only after the castles were completed did Frederick give his attention to the building of houses for the citizens and colonists, the figures for which Manger gives as 3,180,000 taler. I find further that Louis XV., who was frugal in his personal expenditure, allowed to Madame de Pompadour just about as much pocket money (3000 francs monthly during the war, 4000 in peace-time) as Frederick II. had to pay his Barberina. She received 25,000 francs yearly. Voltaire, writing to Thiérot on March 17, 1749, even spoke of 32,000 francs. But officially Barberina was only paid 7000 taler yearly, (143) and she not only had five months' holiday, but could also give plenty of time to more successful wooers than Frederick II.

"It is a legend of the Revolution that Louis XV. ruined France by his extravagance. France succumbed in the great struggle against England, and the wealth of the world, which was then requisite in order to be the world's tutor in artistic matters and to cultivate artistic splendour in the most magnificent style, now found its way to England, who knew how to make good use of it, and in her turn became the instructor of the world in questions of taste.

Hegemann: "You must admit that Sanssouci is not only a very tasteful, but also a very modest bachelor residence for a king."

Manfred: "I once heard Cornelius Gurlitt, who is regarded as the discoverer and one of the best connoisseurs of baroque architecture, speak very disparagingly of Sanssouci. He described it as the work of a dilettante, which might be tolerable, if one could place the castle on a platform, crank it up a little, or shift it nearer to the edge of the terrace. He declared that the Frederician baroque must appear 'unpardonably philistine to anyone who has ever learnt to appreciate South-German baroque.' Gurlitt's estimate seems to me just. And his opinion of Sanssouci entirely coincides with that of Knobelsdorff, the unfortunate architect of the castle. He was heart-broken because the self-willed king spoilt his plan for Sanssouci, and would not allow him to shift the castle nearer to the front edge of the terrace and to raise it by a few steps. As it is, the South side rises out of the sand like a Pharaoh's temple out of the mud of the Nile.

"But it was not only the gifted Knobelsdorff who suffered from the King's ill-treatment. After Knobelsdorff's discomfiture Frederick II. became bolder, and in future treated almost all his artists and architects with the arrogant presumption of his father. In his letters he heaps upon them threats and insults, such as 'arch-robbers,' 'thieveries,' 'as impertinent as they are godless,' 'sack the lot,' 'half-witted,' etc. The architect Manger, who published a collection of Frederician decrees on architectural matters, was not only himself imprisoned on account of Frederick's suspicions, and only released by Frederick's successor, but he also relates how the architects Büding, Hilde-

brandt and the talented Gontard were imprisoned in consequence of the King's suspicions, the last-named for forty-three days. There is nothing here that is reminiscent of the almost incomparable tact and judgment with which Madame de Pompadour—not to speak of Louis XIV.—showed her appreciation of almost every one of her retinue of artists.

“And it was not only the plan for Sanssouci that was spoilt by the caprice of the King. Even more fatal were the consequences of Frederick II.'s self-will in connection with the Berlin Opernplatz, also designed by Knobelsdorff. In Schmettau's great plan of the city is a marginal drawing showing how Knobelsdorff proposed to close the square on the West by a long low line of buildings. But here again Frederick asserted his grotesque caprice and, when he was quite an old man, ruined the classic creation of the deceased Knobelsdorff by one of his stupid, baroque, imitative buildings, of which there are all too many in Potsdam. On the Opernplatz he erected that high baroque structure, which the wit of the Berlin populace dubbed the ‘Book-case.’ Frederick himself named it ‘*Nutrimentum spiritus*,’ thereby proving to the world that his Latin was no more classic than his knowledge of architecture.”

The company present at this conversation happened at that moment to include the Berlin art-connoisseur, Professor Walter Weissbach. He interposed: “Pardon me, but the façade of the old library is constructed in accordance with a design of the great Vienna baroque artist, Fischer von Erlach. This old design for the Imperial Palace was never utilised in Vienna, and Frederick II. did a great service to German art by rescuing this treasure from oblivion and giving it a place of honour in Berlin. Surely you, Mr. Ellis, who have so many ties with Vienna, ought to feel respect and gratitude towards our great King for his far-sighted interest in great German art.”

Manfred Ellis answered with a smile: “I feel almost uneasy!—It was shortly before his death that old Fritz suddenly began to reintroduce baroque (and Viennese baroque!) into a world that had become classic. In the same spirit he also at that time compiled his text-book ‘on German literature,’ in regard to which August von Gotha remarked: ‘The royal spectre has

again appeared.' I have no doubt that Frederick II. seemed to himself very cunning when he insulted Knobelsdorff's successor in the traditional manner by fetching from the Vienna Hofburg the forgotten architectural State horse of the more economical emperor, and harnessing it before the royal Prussian State coach (even in his old days he liked to drive through Berlin in a coach and six). But can you really say that Frederick II. was doing honour to great German art when he placed in the corner of a classic square a structure designed for an entirely different environment in an entirely different age ? "

Weissbach : " I must admit that the inventors of these concave, niche-like façades, artists such as Ricchini of Milan or Fischer von Erlach of Vienna, made their gigantic niches correspond to a thrust from the other side, such as the traffic of the opposite street. In the Berlin Opernplatz the niche of the '*Nutrimendum spiritus*' has no meaning."

Manfred : " This last structure of Frederick is a meaningless copy. Fischer von Erlach's design was excellently suited to the Vienna Platz, but it was quite unsuited to the corner of the Berlin Opernplatz, for which it was never designed. The building is also too short for the space which it is to fill, and it was not even set up in axial relation with the Opera House facing it. (144) And even if this axial relation had been observed, the splendid baroque style of the design for the Vienna palace would still be as ill-suited to the lower and (before its clumsy modern reconstruction) rather severe Opera House and the Hedwigskirche (which adorns the other corner and defies rivalry) as the *Gloria in excelsis* embroidered in gold on the seat of the pastor's trousers in Wolzogen's delightful story '*Die Glorihose*.'

" It is as though Frederick II. in his old age wanted to exhibit in architectural matters that same 'self-willed, prejudiced, incorrigible mode of thought,' of which Goethe accused him. What was the main point in the dispute waged by Frederick II. against Knobelsdorff, whose death it caused ? "

Manfred took up Dr. Fritz Arnheim's authoritative volume, *The Court of Frederick the Great*, and read out : " ' However much his royal master (Frederick II.) might prefer the rococo

style, von Knobelsdorff continued to be a faithful champion of the antique, and wished to conform to the prevailing French fashion at most in regard to the internal decoration of the palaces'.

"Truly the pantomime clown who diverts the mob by always standing on the wrong side with intentional clumsiness is outdone by the royal buffoon, Fritz of Prussia? When he treated Lessing, Winckelmann, Paul Gerhardt and Goethe in turn with the same lack of sympathy, and petty injustice, his admirers tried to find an excuse for him in the fact that, as an old Prussian, he had not such a mastery of the new German language as his more cultivated contemporaries belonging to the Empire; for instance the elder Leibniz, often extolled by Frederick II., or Thomasius, or the plebeian ancestors of Bismarck, men who had done service to the German language before Frederick II., but who were not Prussians. But how do the admirers of Frederick's special culture excuse the fact that in architecture, as in music, language and literature, he persisted, contrary to the best advice, in backing the wrong horse? Do not say that, owing to the dearth of native culture, he involuntarily fell a prey to 'fatal French influences!' The ridiculous thing is that, in French architecture also, Frederick II. failed to realise that rococo was only a transitory decorative caprice, which—so far as the external structure of buildings was concerned—only Germany and other nations equally backward in the architectural art ever took seriously *ad absurdum*, that is to say, misunderstood."

Hegemann: "You describe the Germans as backward in the architectural art? I think——"

Manfred: "Yes, I know, Germany is confident that she is a pioneer. And I am far from echoing those English and French critics, who despise the new Berlin Cathedral and the Leipzig Völkerdenkmal and deny to Germany any talent for architectural art, because she was certainly not a pioneer in gothic, renaissance and eighteenth-century architecture. But what could be achieved even by the most talented nation in the eighteenth century, so long as it was subjected to what Herr Thomas Mann has described as 'the heavy and degrading burden of the royal existence of Frederick II.'?"

"The Germans, and above all Frederick II., remind one in architectural matters of some worthy country folk, such as, for instance, the Dachau peasants, who invented their 'national costume' by decking themselves out in a clumsy imitation of the out-of-date finery of the capital, to which they faithfully adhered. Just as in his internal policy Frederick II. humbly emulated the absolutist vagaries of Louis XIV., although everyone—and above all Louis' successor on the French throne—had long since realised that absolutism was a dangerous error, so to the end of his life Frederick persisted in his allegiance to the tasteless architectural flourishes from the time just after the death of Louis XIV. The threshold of his intelligence was too high for new ideas to penetrate beyond it. Hence he was unable to conceive why the contemporary architects of France (in harmony with the intellectual leaders of Germany, such as Knobelsdorff and Winckelmann) had long since applied themselves to the cultivation of pure classicism, and why, as early as 1750, the Paris Place Louis XV. (the present Place de la Concorde), the greatest architectural creation of the age, was surrounded with purely classic buildings. Frederick II. in his architectural as in his political wisdom, never saw beyond the year 1715. It is noteworthy that von Knobelsdorff was not (like Goethe) younger, but older than the King. No matter whether they were younger or older, Frederick always knew better. He asserted his out-of-date whims in the face of poets, architects and musicians; and all great, living and German art was banished from his environment.

"If only it could be said that at any rate French art had flourished at his court! But not even money could induce French artists to put up with Frederick II. In his Opernplatz there is small trace of the great spirit of the Louvre colonnade and the Place Vendôme. And though Frederick's Seydlitz conquered the younger Prince de Soubise, the New Palace of the royal philosopher and dabbler in all the arts cannot compete in dignity with the older Hôtel de Soubise in Paris.

"Perhaps you consider your King economical because, by employing the old sketch of Fischer von Erlach, he saved an

architect's fee ? In this sense Madame de Pompadour probably was a spendthrift.

"Very well, then, by all means let us say that Louis XV. squandered money (after the death of the Pompadour, Madame du Barry was less economical than her great predecessor), as is maintained by those historians, who like to describe the 'fanfaronnades' of Frederick II. or his hoarding of precious metals and stones for war purposes as frugality. Even so, is it not easier to justify the prodigality of Louis XV. than the financial policy of Frederick II. ?

"When has there ever been a great artistic age without prodigality ? And does not a great and positive artistic achievement perhaps justify 'prodigality,' even prodigality pursued to the point of self-destruction ? Did not every ambitious city in the middle ages more or less ruin itself by the determination to build a magnificent cathedral ? Has it not been asserted that the Popes sacrificed the religious domination of the world, and by their sales of indulgences brought about a philistine reformation, because they wanted to complete the greatest dream of the Renaissance, the mighty cathedral of St. Peter's ? And if it was really the expenditure of Louis XV. and not the defeat in the struggle against England which brought about the French Revolution, and if the French or the nations of the world had to choose, would they elect to renounce the artistic achievements of the age of Louis Quinze ? It is as inconceivable as that the northern world should decide to renounce French gothic."

Hegemann : "Are you not contradicting yourself and recommending self-destruction and sacrifice for the sake of a high artistic end ?"

Manfred laughed victoriously and replied :

"Who can read the details of the life of Madame de Pompadour—and of many other great female masters in the art of living—without being overwhelmed by a sense of that *patriæ inserviendò consumor*, to which these delicate creatures succumb, as though destroyed by the passion of great ideas ! In the first place, the art of Louis XV. did not die, but unfolded its wings quickly and joyfully in *Louis Seize and Empire* ; and then, as I have already stated, the Anglo-Saxons took over the leadership.

It was not wisdom but clumsiness in the French and the continent of Europe to sacrifice themselves, to allow themselves to be beaten by the Anglo-Saxons and deprived of the wealth of the world. And the Anglo-Saxons, who, God knows, did not sacrifice themselves, were rewarded for this by the new leadership of which I have just spoken. In the domain of the culture of the body, of clothing, housing, social life, and, above all, in the domain of supreme political and administrative science, the English became the teachers of the world. If at the present day such men as Otto March, Alfred Lichtwark, Hermann Muthesius and Schultze-Naumburg refer to what they call the high 'dwelling-culture' of the Anglo-Saxons, what does this imply if not that at the present day 'German taste (and this applies, even if not to the same degree, to the whole European continent) has sunk almost to the lowest level' (as Muthesius and those who share his views are unanimous in asserting), while in England and America advances were made in the refinement of taste, which for the most part lie outside the powers of comprehension of the Berlin sages, who undertake to weigh in the balance against one another the cultural achievements of Frederick II. and Louis XIV. Can there be anything more ridiculous than the spectacle of a satisfied and learned inhabitant of a Berlin apartment house (which Muthesius describes as exhibiting 'such a total lack of civilisation, as has never before existed in the dwelling conditions of mankind') or the owner of what Muthesius justly describes as that 'offspring of absurdity, a German villa,' a Berlin-Grunewald villa, undertaking in all seriousness to prove that the money which Madame de Pompadour employed for her unspeakably exquisite Bellevue was squandered, but that the sums five or ten times as large laid out by Frederick the Great on the clumsy 'fanfaronnade' of the New Palace were disbursed with patriotic wisdom ? "

### VOLTAIRE'S CLUMSINESS

"But let us revert once more to the admirer of Madame de Pompadour, to the great Voltaire with his craving for Versailles. From various contemporary diaries and letters it may be deduced



that Voltaire made himself intolerable to Louis XV. by trying to treat his sovereign as his equal."

Hegemann: "Why should not a Voltaire have the right to treat even kings as his equals?"

Manfred answered laughingly: "Because that would be contrary to the law and the prophets, which in a country of great traditions should be complied with to the letter. Racine and even Molière did not treat the great Louis as their equal. They did not, to use Goethe's phrase, 'allow themselves complete human freedom, but always observed a certain decorum.' A man of the type of Frederick II. may like nothing better than that a Voltaire should treat him as his equal and make him believe that he would undertake the correction of the royal verses, even if they were not written by a King who happened to be useful for his ends. '*Il y a assez de plaisir d'être l'unique roi de Prusse,*' said Frederick II., who used to recommend the victims of his hospitality to cast off all restraint ('just as though they were in a tavern'—'*Ici, toute liberté, Monsieur, comme si nous étions au cabaret*') (145), and then himself not infrequently indulged in all kinds of incivilities towards them. Louis XV. did not, like Frederick II., think that to be a king of France was the most beautiful of dreams, and he had sufficient insight to realise that it was folly in anyone, even in Voltaire, to presume to treat as his equal an absolute Sovereign, who has power to send thousands—armed and unarmed alike—to their death, and of whom truly superhuman exploits are demanded. 'Demands which only genius can completely satisfy,' as Heinrich von Treitschke once expressed it. When Louis XV. encounters Richelieu's presumption with the frigid question: 'Duc de Richelieu, how often have you been in the Bastille?' or when he writes a scrupulously formal letter of dismissal to a minister, with whom he had been in intimate daily contact, this produces quite a different impression from the kicks and blows dealt out by the King in Berlin, who surprised old and trusted servants of the State by a 'Hold your tongue' or 'Off to Spandau,' and even outside his sovereign domain subjected Voltaire, whom he had just before extolled as a 'divine being,' to five weeks' confinement, and compelled him to bear the costs of his im-

prisonment, and then later, without having so much as apologised, applied for help to the victim of his outrage.

“But if the name of the victim is Voltaire, he is at least armed.—‘Of all the intellectual weapons which have ever been wielded by man, the most terrible was the mockery of Voltaire,’ said Macaulay, and this weapon struck the great King, and he will perish by it if there are men who know how to read and laugh.

“On December 4, 1780, Frederick related to his confidant Lucchesini the following remark by Voltaire: ‘Voltaire retorted to the King that the republic of learning was free; he had his faults, but whoever desired to make use of his talents must put up with his faults.’

“The relation of an intellectual man to a powerful ruler may be humanly tolerable if the latter is worthy of his power, but because this can seldom—and, in the case of hereditary despotism, never—be the case, it is safer for power and intellect to adhere strictly to consecrated forms—that is to say, to Goethe’s seemliness. There cannot be any question of ‘complete human freedom’.”

Hegemann: “Perhaps we ought first to agree what we mean by ‘complete human freedom’.”

Manfred: “One must understand thereby not merely the forms of daily intimate intercourse with the sovereign: these are only a comparatively unimportant indication of the mental attitude towards the royal duties of preserving and reforming the State. To Louis XV. Voltaire was not only insufferable ‘on account of his impertinence, his familiarity, his habit of obtruding his remarks and, as once happened, plucking his sovereign by the sleeve’; those are some of the reasons cited by that trustworthy authority, Pierre de Nolhac.”

Hegemann: “You yourself alluded just now to the fact that Voltaire very soon brought upon himself the ill-favour of Frederick the Great also. Frederick also was too much a king to put up with Voltaire’s familiarities.”

Manfred: “You are right. By my allusion to the ill-treatment of Voltaire at Frankfurt I perhaps digressed unnecessarily from our main line of argument, because in connection with the

incidents of that time there was so much misdoing on the part both of poet and of King that instead of 'Who was to blame?' one must rather ask 'Who believed the worse of the two?' But as regards this Frankfurt episode in the lifelong relations between Frederick II. and Voltaire, even in Prussia there is little disposition to explain it by Voltaire's familiarity or impertinence in intimate conversation. If Frederick II.'s sleeve was ever plucked by the hand of Voltaire——"

Thomas Mann: "Frederick kissed the emaciated hand which wrote: 'I hate all heroes'."

Manfred: "Certainly! Frederick II. rightly felt himself honoured when Voltaire plucked him by the sleeve. It was only later that Frederick realised the significance of this plucking, and he remarked in the 'Description of Monsieur de Voltaire,' which he composed in 1756: 'Voltaire despises the great: he is quite free from restraint in the presence of his superiors, and only reserved towards his equals.'

"When Diderot in conversation with the Empress Catherine emphasised the proofs of his ascensions—as he had been used to do in discussions with his Paris friends—by thumping the Empress's knee, she merely drew back her chair a little. If he thoughtlessly made use of some rather too obscene expression, and then halted in confusion, she encouraged him with: 'Pray continue, among us men everything is permissible.' She was Diderot's pupil, and she had sufficient intelligence and good humour to make everything else subsidiary to this fact. If you want to hear the orthodox Prussian view of the relation between Frederick II. and his teacher Voltaire, let me read you the following lines of Erich Schmidt, who, as we know, not only honourably fills the Berlin chair of Germanic philology, but also aspires to be a master of historical euphemism in Goethe's sense of the term. Schmidt's sentences (if they are not absolutely foolish) hardly contain a word in which the uninitiated might not suspect a brilliantly ironic suggestion to the contrary. Erich Schmidt writes:

"General and intimate exchange of ideas was part of the daily bread of Frederick the Great. By his loyalty, which never decked itself in the proud purple of the patron, he erected

glorious monuments both to his friends and himself, but, when he encountered baseness, his wit flashed forth with ruthless keenness, and a malicious ape felt the mighty blow of the lion'."

Hegemann: "And what is there to object to in that?"

Manfred: "Absolutely nothing, if, for instance, in the first line one substitutes 'one-sided' for 'general,' or if one takes 'intimate' to be an allusion to the very intimate chaff in which Frederick II. liked to indulge; if, in connection with the 'exchange of ideas,' one recalls how the diaries of de Catt and Lucchesini record this 'exchange' day by day: the King needed listeners, and was not exigent in respect to their worth; he was 'somewhat garrulous'; and if one realises that 'daily bread' is an allusion to those meals lasting from three to six hours at which no educated German was present. Or take the last lines: '... but, when he encountered baseness'; this probably refers to the request which Frederick II. addressed in 1743 to his ambassador in Paris: 'Enclosed is an extract from a letter from Voltaire, which please convey into the hands of the Bishop of Mirepoix by some secret means, so that neither you nor I may appear to be implicated in the matter. My purpose in this is to bring about a breach between Voltaire and France, so that there will be nothing left for him to do save to come to us.' And as regards the 'flashing forth' and 'ruthless keenness' of his wit, and as regards the 'lion' and 'ape,' it is only fair to hear Voltaire's own zoology as well. Voltaire says: 'Certainly one expects to suffer at the hands of kings, but *Frédéric* abused his privilege to excess. Social intercourse has its laws, unless it is intercourse between the lion and the goat. *Frédéric* always transgressed the first law of social intercourse: to say nothing offensive to anyone.'

"Thus did Voltaire write in his much-abused memoirs. In a letter addressed to Frederick II. in 1760 he wrote: 'Your wisdom is marred by the unfortunate delight which you have always taken in trying to humiliate other men and to say things which will wound them, a delight which is the more unworthy of you, since your position and your unique gifts place you above others. You realise no doubt that I am telling you the truth.'

"In these two statements of the 'malicious ape' there is nothing which was not confirmed by a host of witnesses. Was not the friendship of Frederick the Great almost sufficient to expose a man to the suspicion of worthlessness? Even a man so disposed to admire Frederick II. as the Prince de Ligne was on his guard: 'I had no desire to become his d'Argens or his Algarotti'; though the amiable prince proceeds to excuse the bad manners of the great King by the bad company with which he surrounded himself."

Hegemann: "I am not yet quite clear whether you are defending Voltaire or Frederick II. or Louis XV.?"

Manfred: "Certainly not Erich Schmidt's malicious ape or avenging lion, nor the social intercourse of the lion with the goat. I would rather say that the tones which resound from the menagerie thus described are in no way suggestive of that good tone and seemliness, without which Goethe could not live; and I believe that when Louis XV. was displeased by sallies of revolutionary wit, this was not mere weakness, but rather something of that same royal dignity which led Maria Theresa to object to the youthful manifestations of such wit in her son Joseph. Maria Theresa's maternal admonitions to her son often read as though they were addressed by the Empress to that disloyal Prince of the Empire, Frederick II. She writes:

"'It is high time that you should cease to take pleasure in these jests and displays of wit, by which you merely annoy people and make them appear ridiculous, drive away all decent folk and finally come to believe that the whole human race is unworthy of love or respect, because, by your own conduct, you have banished all men of desert and kept the door open for knaves, flatterers and admirers of your talents'."

Thomas Mann: "Maria Theresa's clear-sighted womanly instinct revealed to her the nature of Frederick II., who saw in all the human folk around him a mere child-begetting rabble."

Manfred: "The insight of Maria Theresa, her discernment, her intelligence, her prophetic gift, her instinct—if that is the most royal expression for the clear judgment of this illustrious woman—and her mother-wit were infallible. Her letter continues: 'A witty remark or jest which you find in a book or

overhear enraptures you, and you employ it at the first opportunity, without troubling to consider whether it is becoming; very much as your sister Elizabeth does with her beauty; whether it be porter or prince who admires her, she is equally satisfied, and asks for nothing better.' Whether it be porter or prince! Might one not imagine that the Empress was speaking of what Bismarck described as Frederick II.'s 'craving for approval,' which made the king desire to shine, whether it be in the presence of the Prince de Ligne or of the Swiss student, de Catt, and the aberrations of which forced 'Old Fritz' to apologise to the young Lucchesini, as he had done to the old Ziethen? You diagnosed Maria Theresa's judgment as 'clear-sighted womanly instinct,' which, it is to be hoped, does not imply anything pathological. Frederick II.'s self-complacent lack of judgment is described by the Berlin historical psychologist, Heinrich von Treitschke, who was equally lacking in judgment, as follows: 'A true son of the eighteenth century, that most self-complacent of all epochs, Frederick cradles himself proudly and securely on the high-surfing billows of that new culture which was streaming in from France.' Treitschke had little understanding of the new culture, or he would have known that bad taste was not forgiven, even in its most fervid admirers."

Thomas Mann: "There was a touch of cynicism in Frederick's mode of recreation and dissipation—in those eternal blasphemies against God and religion at his suppers, that dry and malicious pleasure in exasperating beyond endurance the philosophers and men of letters who were his guests and in setting them at loggerheads with one another. Later he kept a number of dogs, and wanted to be buried near them. When the last of them died, he wept for days. He still enjoyed making mischief between his philosophers for a time; then he showed them the door.

Manfred: "Lord Macaulay drew a comparison between the literary protégés of Frederick the Great and the English writers of that time, and came to the conclusion: 'We have no hesitation in saying that the poorest author of that time in London, sleeping on a bulk, dining in a cellar, with a cravat of paper, and

a skewer for a shirt-pin was a happier man than any of the literary inmates of Frederick's court.' Against the danger of being shown the door, to which you referred, Goethe recommended 'seemliness' in intercourse with 'high personages'; he also advised that the threshold of familiarity with princes should never be transgressed. 'Seemliness' was Goethe's shield against the insolences of the great, a protective weapon, of which he was frequently forced to make use, because the number and the incivility of the great in Germany was certainly no less than in other countries. Goethe's enemies often went so far as to accuse the Weimar privy councillor of servility and toadying to princes."

#### DUKE CHARLES AUGUSTUS AND BARON VOM STEIN

Hegemann: "It was fortunate that Goethe found in Duke Charles Augustus a master whom it was easy to serve."

Manfred: "What Goethe wished his Duke to be he has described in *Tasso*. What his Duke really was, who knows? Possibly the importance of the influence of Sanssouci is underestimated here; one has become so accustomed to the painting of this influence in flattering colours that one is apt to forget its real colour, and to disregard warnings such as that of Lessing against the 'bad example of the cynic on the throne,' as though they came from some canting nonentity. And yet it seems likely that the great Frederick elicited something more than military admiration from his nephew, Duke Charles Augustus. After all Goethe's attempts to dissuade his master from the 'military macaronis' had failed, and the ducal hopes of the rank of Prussian Major General had been fulfilled, it was not surprising if the admiring nephew should unconsciously model himself on his great uncle as a man as well as a soldier. This would perhaps explain the rather painful story related of Duke Charles Augustus by Ernst Moritz Arndt. Arndt, who wrote: 'What is the German Fatherland' and 'Be strong in love, grow weak in hate,' is surely a witness not to be despised."

When we expressed our desire for further information regarding the story related by Arndt, Manfred promptly put his hand on *Travels and Ramblings with Baron Friedrich vom Stein*, and read as follows :

“Stein was healthy and possessed of the most delightful disposition. Duke Charles Augustus behaved in his usual very soldierly fashion : at once a born prince, free from all restraint, and a cheerful, vigorous man, with abundance of wit and good spirits. He had inherited the best of his natural parts from his guelf mother ; the impression which he made and left on merely superficial observers was extremely amiable ; he remained the ruler in society and yet allowed liberty to all. The intercourse between the two distinguished men was quite unconstrained, almost as though they had been friends from boyhood ; the illustrious baron seemed no whit inferior to the still more illustrious prince. But the remarkable thing was that, when the conversation turned on serious subjects, nay when they were so much as referred to by a hint or a smile, Stein was always the prince, and the other seemed hardly more than the servant. Then it became very obvious that this was a domain in which the Duke felt himself at a loss, and his ordinary methods and talents stood him in no stead. Here he appeared as nothing more than the frivolous scoffer and jester or as the sceptic and quibbler, or as a Mephistopheles, who perhaps in many ways did more to degrade even Goethe than to exalt him. Another remarkable circumstance was that the Duke always felt an itch to rouse Stein to anger and seemed to revel in his indignation’ (much as Frederick the Great liked to stir up squabbles), ‘while he himself, amid the Baron’s lightning thrusts and counterthrusts, preserved his princely indifference like an epicurean god.’ Then Arndt gives an account of various political discussions between the Duke and the Baron and of the Catholic priestly ordination of Zacharias Werner, the author of *Luther*, regarding whom Arndt has not much good to say. He continues : ‘The Duke related a number of obscene anecdotes regarding this poet, who had for some time lived in his immediate neighbourhood at Weimar, and all in such a lax, frivolous tone, that the Baron was roused to fury. . . . The



Duke concluded by remarking that every man had gone through much the same experiences; 'you yourself'—he turned to Stein—'have no doubt not always lived like a Joseph.' (Frederick II. wrote in much the same terms to Voltaire.) 'Even if that were so,' replied Stein, 'it would concern no one but myself, but I have always felt a loathing for obscene conversation, and I do not think it fitting that a German prince should indulge himself in it before young officers'—there were several present, in addition to older men. The Duke said nothing, and there was an interval of deathlike silence. After a few minutes, the Duke passed his hand over his face, and resumed the conversation, as though nothing had happened; the company, however, were overcome by embarrassment. Colonel von Ende, until recently in the Duke's service at Weimar, now governor of the city of Cologne, confessed to his companion on his way home that he would rather face the fire of two batteries than endure such conversation for long; and Count Solms-Laubach, Lord-Lieutenant of the Prussian Rhineland, exclaimed in the spirit of an old count of the Empire and former member of the Imperial Aulic Council at Vienna: 'What a way to speak to princes! It has thrown me into a fever; I was terrified that there would be a scene.' And there had, I think, been a very lively scene." There you have Arndt's account, and he could hardly have given a more animated description of a trial of strength between a Götz and a Weislingen. It was such scenes that were avoided by Goethe, even when 'the malicious ape' was not threatened by Erich Schmidt's 'mighty paw of the lion,' and when the 'ape' was vom Stein. But the means by which Goethe avoided this sort of explosion, his sense of 'seemliness,' provoked Arndt to the following scathing description of Goethe's journey in company with Stein:

"It was certainly reminiscent of Aesop's journey of the stone pot and the earthen pot. They set out for Cologne side by side in a gentle spirit of *Noli me tangere*. Never have I heard Stein discourse in more subdued tones. I now had an opportunity of quietly studying our hero, Goethe, for a few days and of revelling in the splendour of his appearance: the fine broad

brow and the magnificent brown eyes, which seemed always fixed in a wide, reflective gaze on everything and everybody that they encountered. . . . Goethe was a minister and an Excellency, and indeed one of the most excellent Excellencies in our fatherland; but here in Cologne? Well! well! Some of the young officers who were stationed in Cologne came to pay their respects to him, men whose brothers and cousins he knew, Thuringians and others, ministers' sons, barons' sons, among them Wilhelm Humboldt's eldest son, youths before whom Stein, or even one of ourselves, would not even have bared the head—and Goethe behaved to them as though he were their inferior. This formality, this almost servile attitude towards the scions of our aristocracy, possibly the result of youthful habit combined with a natural stiffness, was put down by the casual observer to arrogance on the part of this man, who, though proud, was both generous and brave.'

"Arrogance! Is not this use of the word remarkable? Perhaps Arndt means obsequiousness! Yet is it not the height of arrogant pride and the most pretentious of all pretensions for a Goethe to be obsequious? Does it not make him appear even more terrible than when in an unguarded hour he appeared to Doctor Kieser in 1813 like 'the golden dragons of the Chinese emperors, which can only tolerate majesty. I never saw him so terribly violent, prodigious, wrathful.' Even if this golden dragon wanted to communicate his great designs to us, as he did to Kieser, in strictest confidence and to enlist our cooperation, what would he have said of strictly confidential intercourse with high personages? Frederick II. made the intellectual despot of Europe, the 'divine' Voltaire, his chamberlain, and wanted to degrade him to the position of his boon companion; he also said: 'In my dominions a lieutenant ranks higher than a chamberlain.' Voltaire took flight, but he would have gladly preserved his gilded chamberlain's key, together with other baubles, because he needed vassals for his great plans.

"Goethe in a 'servile attitude' before Charles Augustus or the young sprigs of the German aristocracy kindles thoughts of aristophanic exuberance, as extravagant as those scenes in

the second part of *Faust*, in which Mephistopheles appears as the court jester, or emerges from the prompter's niche with the words: 'Insinuations are the devil's eloquence'; Goethe too was a chamberlain, and defended his key against hostile attacks:

Is it for nothing I am in this place?  
Do I not hold this key?  
It guided me through horror and the surge  
Of loneliness hither to this firm shore.  
Here do I take my stand! Here are realities,  
From here the spirit may contend with spirits,  
Prepare itself the great, the double empire.

What are you doing, Faust! Faust! . . .

He turns the key towards the youth,  
Touches him!—Oh woe! Oh woe!  
(*Explosion. Faust lies on the ground.*)

'Intercourse with high personages is dangerous.'

Manfred possessed an extraordinary capacity for declaiming German verses very effectively and with an almost pure accent, of suddenly, as it were, conjuring up a mental stage, suggesting amazing and far-reaching trains of thought and holding the rapt attention of his listeners. He seemed deeply moved and murmured half to himself: "'Prepare itself the great, the double empire . . .'" I recalled him to earth by a matter-of-fact comment:

"I simply cannot get over this story of Arndt's: Goethe in a servile attitude before the 'sons of barons'! That is really too much!"

Manfred: "It was not only Frederick II. who 'showed his philosophers the door,' as Thomas Mann has just expressed it, or, in obedience to his principle: 'Newspapers, if they are to be interesting, must be given freedom,' had journalists flogged by Prussian hirelings, because they dared to be loyal to the Empire. Goethe has described in *Werther* a scene in which the hero is turned out of doors by an aristocratic rabble, because he is a plebeian; and the scene in *Tasso*, where Antonio behaves 'rudely and spitefully, like an uncouth, ill-bred man,' always

suggests to my mind a flogging, and my blood boils when I think of it. It is probably a reminiscence of a scene which actually took place between Goethe and Count Goertz, afterwards ambassador of Frederick II., or some other aristocratic individual."

## PRUSSIAN INFLUENCES AND CASANOVA

"Prussian historians rightly speak of the great influence which Prussia was already at that time beginning to exercise upon the development of German intellectual life. What this influence amounted to as regards the freedom of the writer in his intercourse with the court and the 'court rabble' is described by Lessing in a letter to Nicolai dated 1769, on the basis of his Berlin observations, as follows :

" 'Do not ask me to think or write anything of your Berlin freedom ; it reduces itself simply and solely to the freedom to retail as many foolish utterances about religion as one likes. And of this freedom the honest man must soon be ashamed to avail himself.' Frederick II. was never ashamed to do so ; but Lessing continued : ' But only let someone in Berlin try to write as freely about other things as Sonnenfels has written in Vienna ; let him try to speak the truth to the aristocratic court-rabble in the same way as Sonnenfels spoke it ; let anyone try to raise his voice in Berlin on behalf of the rights of the subjects and against extortion and despotism, as is done at the present time in France and Denmark, and you will soon find out which country is up to the present day the most slavish country in Europe.'

"One would like to think that Lessing had exaggerated this Prussian slavery, but Frederick II. repeatedly expressed himself in much the same terms regarding Prussian conditions, and declared that he was tired of ruling over slaves. Maria Theresa could therefore say with pride : ' In Prussia they are all slaves ; here the people serve us from motives of affection.' (146)

"The Duke of Württemberg, Charles Eugene, had perhaps of all the princes of the Empire most reason to rejoice in Frederick's influence, and he was therefore well adapted to

convey this influence towards the South. Frederick II. had, in the guise of a fatigued friend, kept him in his household at Potsdam for three years, until he came of age. Charles Eugene then endeavoured to introduce the 'Berlin freedom' referred to by Lessing into Württemberg by throwing into prison the distinguished political scientist, Moser, and later the gifted poet, Schubart, and keeping them there for several years. It was also quite in the Frederician spirit that Charles Eugene founded a Military Academy, where, however, Schiller, as he declared in 1784, did not get to know a single person, 'for the four hundred who surrounded me were one single creature, the faithful copy of one and the same model, which plastic nature had solemnly repudiated.' The influence of the Duke's country of origin could not have made itself more clearly manifest. On his visit to Swabia in 1793, Schiller also found that the 'clear, aspiring intellects' among his former school-companions had become quite materialistic and boorish.' And yet on the whole these conditions in South Germany were more favourable than in Prussia.

"According to Reinhold Koser, as late as 1769 the Pomeranian nobility still supplied to the Berlin Cadet Corps—which furnished the pattern for the Württemberg Military Academy—sons of barons who could neither read nor write. Nor was the subsequent education of these young aristocrats calculated to make them any better masters of their mother tongue than was their sovereign, with his 'coachman's' German and his '*Des Augustes feront des Virgiles*.' Reinhold Koser becomes positively affecting, when he goes on to describe the further development of the Prussian educational system: 'The King was by no means satisfied with what had been gradually achieved; he said once that it would require a complete transformation of the national type, in order to overcome the obstacles presented by superficiality, indolence and proneness to excesses.'

"This national Prussian type, to which Frederick II. alludes, and which threatened under his influence to transform completely the German national type, was the type against which Goethe had to be on his guard. Frederick's feeling of despair is all the more touching in view of the fact, previously referred

to by Koser, that he had founded a special preparatory training school for the Pomeranian nobility. Koser might have added that Frederick had appointed as instructor of these young Pomeranian aristocrats the famous Casanova, who possessed the best qualification for the post in Frederick's eyes, namely, that of being a foreigner. Koser, for some unexplained reason, makes no reference to this appointment of Casanova on the occasion of his journey through Prussia, but it is related in detail in Casanova's memoirs; they describe how the great Italian gave one glance at these 'poor boobies from the rich province of Pomerania' and said farewell to them for ever, not, however, until he had been a witness of the wrathful endeavours made by the King in person to insist on their observing the elementary rules of cleanliness. There was no lack of diverting episodes connected with the two meetings between the worldly Don Juan, Casanova, and the most famous condottiere of the rococo (though condemned to the hell of trivialities)—do you know any better description of the character of Frederick II.? Casanova's description of the daring conversation of the King corresponds too exactly with the reports of de Catt and Lucchesini to be other than trustworthy, and the meeting between Casanova and *Fédéric* acquires a real historic charm in the case of the incident in the Military School, because Casanova remains proud and unmoved, while Frederick II. appears rather as the penitent; Casanova laughs; the King scolds. Both had abandoned themselves recklessly to the satisfaction of their lust and passion, but the military adventures of the King had been crowned with less success than the love adventures of Casanova, whose radiant health gaily triumphed over all the quicksilver cures. Frederick II.'s twenty-three years of zealous toil to make good his 'heroic weaknesses'—his neglected 'splendid attention to culture' and his twenty-three years of youthful, military sins—are significantly symbolised in the incident with the chamber-pot of his young Pomeranians. The number of Casanova's natural children probably exceeded that of the unfruitful King's Pomeranian cadets, but Casanova left the care of their chamber-pots to others. One cannot but regret the untimely death of the Margravine of Bayreuth; this

little story of Casanova's might well have been included in her reminiscences of the parental abode of Frederick the Great.

"One might question whether Goethe's 'servile attitude' towards the sprigs of the German nobility was not premature, so long as the latter had not yet entirely overcome the Frederician influence, and therefore had no claim to be reckoned among the 'high personages.' In the Zedlitz Register of the Prussian Aristocracy, if I am not mistaken, there is a description of a Pomeranian village with twelve noble families, where, after the Seven Years' War—it sounds incredible—the only inhabitants who were not members of the aristocracy were the night-watchman and the cowherd, and even they were betrothed to daughters of noble families. Frederick II., too, sometimes speaks of the *vulgaire* of his aristocracy. On the other hand, it has to be considered that this combination of a defective education with the claim to a high social position was dangerous. The collected works of Frederick II. include the angry letter in which he informs Lieutenant von Kalckstein (possibly a descendant of the von Kalckstein who was condemned to torture by the Great Elector) of his transfer to another regiment as a punishment, because this officer had killed a drummer in a fit of anger. Perhaps Frederick the Great regretted later that he had punished the young officer so severely, since the latter had perhaps after all only tried to maintain discipline in the Frederician manner. In any case the King wrote ten years later in his secret testament of 1768 (thus, after the experiences of the three Frederician civil wars):

*'Quant au soldat . . . il faut qu'il craigne plus ses officiers que les périls auxquels on l'expose, ou jamais personne ne pourra le mener à la charge à travers une tempête de trois cent canons qui le foudroient. La bonne volonté n'engagera jamais le vulgaire dans de semblables périls, il faut que ce soit la crainte.'*

"The danger existed that the nobles educated in the Frederician spirit, who at the command of their King were 'more feared by their soldiers than three hundred cannon,' when once they started to play a part in the intellectual life of their nation, would not only kill or thrash drummers, but also the writers of literary compositions which displeased them, and that, for ex-

ample, the author of an '*imitation détestable de ces mauvaises pièces anglaises*' would not be secure from their all too lively interest, especially if he had dared, as Goethe did, to call the royal craving for war an 'itch.' To the honour of Frederick the Great it should, however, be mentioned that after the Seven Years' War he issued an order, in which the officers were expressly forbidden to thrash the citizens. But habits of this sort, when they have once taken root, cannot be uprooted all in a moment, even in Prussia, not even when so 'humane' a king as Frederick has ordered the uprooting. Frederick II. was himself, as we know, less given to flogging his subjects, at any rate with his own hands, than his father, and he is said only to have struck high government officials on the shoulder with his stick, when he found it necessary to threaten them with Spandau. Goethe, however, knew that even in 1778 great caution was requisite in intercourse with officers and other 'high personages,' who were Prussian or influenced by Prussia. After his visit to Berlin he wrote in the famous letter to Merck, in which he refers to the 'rascallions' of Frederick II.: 'Otherwise I have had no intercourse with anybody, and have not uttered a word in the Prussian States which they could not put into print.' It sounds as though Goethe had been expressly warned; and when he described to Frau von Stein his impressions of Berlin: 'All the obscenity and absurdity of the harlequinades is not so repulsive as this jumble of greatness, mediocrity and paltriness,' this suggests that he found the warnings justified. They can in fact hardly have been exaggerated. Baron vom Stein, in the last year of Goethe's life, spoke disparagingly of the old Prussian aristocracy; he called them 'barons and nothing else' . . . 'in Further Pomerania and in the Brandenburg sand dunes, who are necessarily incapable of any but the most backward and benighted notions and views.' Baron vom Stein explained this peculiar Prussian state of mind as follows: 'They are subject to too much Polish and Russian influence. They cannot be called a knightly and imperial nobility, hardly a semi-German nobility; they are a *genus hybridum*, which still preserves some of the instincts of a savage and long-extinct antediluvian animal'."



## VOLTAIRE'S ILL-TREATMENT

"It would be unjust to seek this 'antediluvian animal' exclusively among the Prussian nobility. At the time when Stein penned his accusation, hardly a hundred and fifty years had passed in England and hardly a hundred in France since in those countries members of the aristocracy had brutally attacked famous, and therefore plebeian writers—I am thinking of Dryden and Voltaire, and, just as Antonio did not draw his sword against Tasso, they had their victims flogged by hired ruffians, while they themselves kept at a distance (Frederick II. subsequently treated the representatives of the Cologne and Erlanger newspapers in much the same fashion). Even in 1830, when Goethe said: 'A German writer—a German martyr; you will not find it to be otherwise,' he tried to console himself with the fact that the case had been no better in England and France, and referred to the fates of Molière, Voltaire and Rousseau, as well as to that of Byron, who was driven from England by malicious tongues.

"At the time of Goethe's visit to Berlin, which was also the time of Goethe's most strenuous political efforts directed against Frederick II., the political and social conditions resulting from Prussian influence were if anything more distressing than those described later by Baron vom Stein. Goethe's political failures convinced him that even the most earnest and altruistic endeavours would have no prospect of success under existing conditions. Not long before his flight to Italy he wrote: 'Any one who meddles in the administration without being a ruling sovereign must be either a philistine or a rogue or a fool.' Thereby Goethe admits the bankruptcy of that public opinion, the vigorous development of which is a necessary condition of all civil freedom, of all worthy political life, in the 'free' countries, if I may use the expression minted by Frederick the Great himself when he spoke of 'free England.' This sacrifice of his convictions did not come easily to Goethe: at that very time he was complaining bitterly, though not openly, of the bungling of the administration, and of 'that craving for war,

which is like an itch beneath the skin of our princes' . . . 'I feel no more pity, sympathy, hope nor indulgence on this head. Strive to take up your cross and follow me' (this letter, written in 1785, is addressed to Knebel). Goethe spoke of the 'devil of folly, ignorance and incompetence of many men,' and at that time he realised—almost as did H. Taine and almost as though foreseeing the coming political revolutions—even though he only admitted it in a confidential letter: 'Our moral and political world is mined like some great city, with subterranean cellars and sewers, to the connection of which and to the conditions of whose inhabitants no one gives any thought. Only the man who is familiar with them will experience little surprise, if one day they are convulsed by an earthquake, if a smoke rises up as though from a ravine, and a babel of voices is heard. Cares attack me like hungry lions. . . . I wear myself out working for others, and achieve nothing.'

"Whereas, however, in Germany, Goethe in 1785 still deemed it hopeless to speak publicly of the distress inspired in him by the sight of 'our moral and political world,' in France intellects of the rank of Molière's and Voltaire's had dared, or been fools enough, to concern themselves with the moral and political administration, and rashly unmasked the 'devil of ignorance of many men'; and it was not Louis XIV. nor Louis XV., but turbulent members of the aristocracy, who conceived themselves to be so seriously threatened by these efforts towards emancipation that they laid violent hands on Molière and Voltaire."

Thomas Mann smiled, and recited with slightly ironic emphasis the lines:

Thus mounting ever to a greater freedom,  
Humanity attains undreamed-of heights!

and added: "How is one to conceive this noble activism? As aesthetics or as politics? Often there is no third alternative: Perhaps as politics—in an aesthetic context."

Manfred: "Rather as ethics. At any rate there is discernible in the conduct of the Duc de Rohan ('*roi ne puis, duc ne daigne, Rohan je suis!*')—Was there ever a prouder device?), who had

Voltaire thrashed, a delicate and humane consideration. He called out to his hirelings while they were thrashing Voltaire : 'Do not strike him on the head ; something good may yet come out of it.' This gracious consideration on the part of the noble gentleman wrung exclamations of approval from the crowd of spectators : 'Oh, the kind gentleman !' Amazing as it may sound, this was the same Paris mob, who after the French defeat at Rossbach extolled Frederick the Second as 'the Great,' a description which is still accepted as valid by many people at the present day. Voltaire, who could not retaliate upon his opponent but was placed in the Bastille, fled to 'free' England, and brought thence those ideas which later involved the death on the scaffold of many cultured and innocent young aristocrats."

#### THE FRIENDSHIP OF LOUIS XIV. AND THE REVENGE OF MOLIERE

I purposely disregarded Manfred's allusion to Rossbach and remarked : "As chance would have it, Mr. Georg Brandes gave me yesterday an account of the similar accident which befell Molière, which exhibits even Louis XIV. rather in the light of a hooligan. The Comte de la Feuillade, believing himself to have been attacked by Molière in the *Ecole des Femmes*, seized the unsuspecting poet by the collar as he was in the act of bowing, and rubbed his face against the metal buttons of his coat until it bled ; and Louis XIV. is said to have given his previous sanction to this chastisement. At any rate, according to Mr. Brandes, when La Feuillade asked : 'Can Your Majesty do without Molière ?' Louis XIV., who perfectly understood the meaning of this question, is said to have given the not very kingly answer : 'La Feuillade, I crave mercy for Molière.' I should like to know more about this La Feuillade, for it was to him that Paris owed the once beautiful Place des Victoires."

Manfred : "The attacks upon the Marshal de la Feuillade—who was a courtier in the best, indeed the most daring sense of that great age—emanate from persons who were envious of him and are not trustworthy. The oft-recounted episode between

La Feuillade and Molière originated in an account which was written more than sixty years after the performance of the *Ecole des Femmes*. Molière had been dead for more than fifty years, La Feuillade for more than thirty years, when this story, which is a blot on the memory of both men, was first circulated."

Hegemann: "But what motive could any one have for inventing such an ugly story?"

Manfred: "The Comte de la Feuillade had an arrogant son, upon whom many people would gladly have vented their spite. Moreover, the scandalous stories concerning the actor, Molière, and his young wife, the famous actress, Armande, were rife before Molière's death and still more after it. Molière's unsuccessful rivals composed such outrageous libels that often they had to go to Cologne or Frankfurt to find printers for them. If one were to believe this story of the ill-treatment of Molière by the Comte de la Feuillade with the approval of Louis XIV., and then to add the backstairs rumour that it was owing to Louis XIV. that the aging Racine fell into disfavour and died in a garret, the great Louis would indeed appear in an odious light. One would only have to recall further that Fénélon too died in disfavour, that Pascal's immortal *Lettres provinciales* were burnt, and a few more similar distressing facts, in order to be impelled to ask: If that is all that comes of the much-boasted and ardently desired reign of a royal Maecenas, the plea with which Frederick II. in conversation with Mirabeau tried to excuse his lack of appreciation of German literature is perhaps not devoid of truth? Frederick II. said: 'What greater service could I have rendered to German literature than neither to heed it nor to read it?' However just and praiseworthy this candid admission may be, the situation in France was in fact altogether different. Frederick II. himself would have been the last to maintain that it was the duty of Louis XIV. to keep his hands off the intellectual life of his people."

Thomas Mann exclaimed questioningly: "Why not?" and he reminded us of Schiller's lines:

For where slaves bend the knee and despots rule,  
Where a false greatness flaunts its idle power,

There art can never fashion noble things ;  
 No Louis sows its seed through his wide realm,  
 From its own plenty it must grow and bloom, . . .

Manfred answered laughingly : " That is Schiller's veiled description of conditions in Prussia. In the same poem he says of France :

With the Frank only art had still survived.  
 Language is turned to song upon his lips ;  
 His is a realm of harmony and beauty ;  
 In noble order part is linked with part,  
 So that the whole becomes a solemn temple,  
 And motion draws enchantment from the dance.

" I am not in love with Schiller's ' whole,' but he seems to have been prepared to appreciate French achievements. Certainly, such a ' realm of harmony and beauty ' does not come into being ' where slaves bend the knee and despots rule.' No ! :

Truth and truth only will it take for bride,  
 And kindle only free souls with its flame.

" But it is not ' good tone,' not ' seemliness ' that robs us of freedom. You asked why Frederick II. should not have thought that Louis XIV. too would have done best to keep his hands off French art, as Frederick declared that he had kept his off German art, and to its advantage ? The answer seems to me simple : Because Voltaire did not think so ! In his *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, the bulk of which was written in Berlin, Voltaire exclaims admiringly : ' Louis XIV. knew and honoured all the great poets, with the exception of Lafontaine, whom a simplicity amounting to uncouthness kept away from court.' (Lafontaine was an artistic and romantically incurable vagabond.) Frederick II., in obedience to Voltaire's instructions, often expressed his admiration of Louis XIV.'s encouragement of the arts. In the following letter to Frederick II., written in 1775, I fancy that the mocking Voltaire was politely expressing his views regarding the literary tasks and capabilities of a Prussian king : ' The sun of German literature is only beginning to rise ; it would be radiant noonday, if Your Majesty had deigned to compose

German verses.' Louis XIV. had not fallen a victim to the vice of royal verse-making, in which Frederick indulged to excess, and Molière, Racine and the other literary friends of the French monarch never complained, as did Voltaire in Sanssouci, of being obliged to wash their King's dirty verses. Nor did Louis XIV. write a learned dissertation on French literature, although he knew a vast deal more about it than did Frederick II. about German literature when he undertook to write an exhaustive treatise on the latter.

"That 'knowing and protecting all great poets,' which Voltaire praises in Louis XIV., was the sublime pattern, which Frederick II. emulated in vain, when he wrote that he intended to make Berlin 'the temple of great men.' The fact that Frederick II. was referring here to foreign great men accords to a certain extent with the attitude of Louis XIV., of whom Voltaire said that he had founded an international republic of scholars. In fact, Louis XIV. formed ties with the intellectual giants of other countries by the bestowal of favours, and he even sent gifts to the now no longer famous German universities of Altdorf and Helmstädt. Louis XIV., however, afforded no precedent for the unparalleled discrimination with which Frederick II. bestowed his praise upon Canitz and his contempt upon Paul Gerhardt and Goethe, drove from the country such great men as Herder, Winckelmann, Lessing and Voltaire, and (as the Prince de Ligne, for all his wish to admire, is driven to confess) 'surrounded himself with people of bad taste,' bestowing presents of money upon La Mettrie, Pöllnitz, La Beaumelle, the Abbé de Prades, Lucchesini and other intellectual companions, in order to induce them to remain in his prickly vicinity. No, all this is purely Frederician! On the other hand, Frederick the Great's contempt for Napoleon's favourite German poet—a contempt based on the popular drama, *Götz von Berlichingen*, which was performed at that time in Berlin—affords a delightful contrast with the appreciation of Louis XIV. for the popular plays of Scarron, one of which pleased the Roi-Soleil so much that in his younger days he witnessed three performances of it in one day. These popular pieces of Scarron have something of that rabelaisian exuberance which Molière

too delighted in. Closely akin to them are those German harlequinades, which Frederick II.'s 'Saxon swan,' Gottsched, banished from the German theatre, in a foolish attempt to ape the French, much as Frederick himself later declaimed against the popular *Götz von Berlichingen*, and would have declaimed against Goethe's *Harlequin's Wedding*, if Goethe had been persuaded by an appreciative Louis XIV.—without the knowledge of Frederick II.—to complete this farce, which, as it is, unfortunately remains a fragment. The contrast between the utter remoteness of Frederick II. from German national sentiment, and the deep sympathy of Louis XIV. with French national sentiment, is exhibited in nothing more clearly than in the respective attitudes of the two monarchs to the popular stage."

Hegemann: "You must admit that Frederick II. in his youth had nothing like the same inducements as Louis XIV. to become enthusiastic on behalf of a national theatre."

Manfred: "There is a story that Frederick, when he was Crown Prince, turned away in disgust from a theatrical performance which highly amused his father, and certainly in the flogged Prussia of Frederick William I. the outlook was fairly hopeless. The foolishness of the Prussian historians is particularly evident when they speak of the hopeless conditions in Prussia, as though they were typical of conditions in the German Empire in the eighteenth century, and thereby try to excuse Frederick's aping of the French."

"Listen to what a non-Prussian like Cornelius Gurlitt (compared with Prussian historians he seems like an educated foreigner) has to say about Augustus the Strong. Certainly Augustus had travelled, and, unlike the Prussian kings, had seen something of the world; above all, he did not suffer from Frederick II.'s provincial propensity to grovel before Paris and fear to stand upon his own feet."

Hegemann: "Had not Augustus the Strong any French actors?"

Manfred: "He had and he appreciated them, but they did not prevent this King from sharing the intellectual life of his people. He was not so miserably devoid of imagination as to be incapable of appreciating the lofty significance of the aspira-

tions of his own nation and of showing his sympathy with those aspirations. He, the King of Poland, interested himself in the German actors, and supplied them with clothes out of the stores of the royal court theatre. A royal court actor was principal of the High German Company. And the discriminating sympathy of Augustus bore better fruit than the indiscriminating disdain of Frederick II. It was from this Saxon High German Company, and not from Frederick II.'s French theatre in the Gendarmenmarkt, that the ducal Saxe-Merseburg and Weimar court comedians took their origin. Karoline Neuber and the great names of the subsequent period from Eckhoff to Iffland all belonged to this group, and without the encouragement which it afforded, the Hamburg Dramaturgy of the Saxon Lessing would have been impossible. Even the most ordinary intelligence would have saved a king capable of political thought from spurning this intellectual sword polished in Saxony, which Lessing was eager to devote to the service of a gracious sovereign. But this king was no king.

"If Richelieu, Mazarin and Louis XIV. had been as snobbishly infatuated with foreign ways as Frederick II., they would—with just as much right as Frederick—have neglected their national culture and bestowed all their attention on the then more highly developed Italian culture. And this lack of discernment would have condemned the French theatre to the same ignominious death as the Prussian theatre. Prussians like to insist that one ought not to expect from Frederick II. as much German national insight as was exhibited by the mother of Charles Augustus of Weimar, who was thirty years younger than Frederick. But in any case one is surely justified in demanding from Frederick II. as much appreciation of those imponderable but immensely important elements of German nationalism, as had already been displayed forty years earlier by the King of Poland."

Hegemann: "It has always struck me as a very amusing and indeed very commendable action on the part of Frederick the Great that he soundly rated those pious hypocrites at Halle, when they declaimed against the German actors."

Manfred: "Yes, that sounds very well. But let us examine



it a little more closely. I fancy that we shall find it to be nothing more than Frederician unmannerliness, directed with infallible sureness against the wrong victim."

Manfred turned over the leaves of some old books. I recognised Preuss, Busching and J. C. Freier. (Manfred in general preferred the older books about Frederick to the more modern; he thought them more honest.) Then he continued:-

"Certainly, in the year 1745, as a result of the students' brawls which occurred in the theatre, the University of Halle requested that 'owing to the disorders which have occurred, no more actors should be suffered within the city,' and Frederick II. replied in the clumsily insolent style of his father: 'The canting clerics are to blame. They are to play, and Herr Francke, or whatever the name of the rascal may be, is to be present, and to make public reparation to the students for his foolish suggestion, and an attestation that he was present is to be sent me from the actors.'

"And 'Herr Francke, or whatever the name of the rascal may be,' the son of the founder of the Francke Institutions, had to pay a fine of twenty taler, although the University reported that 'Professor Francke had been in no way concerned in this matter.'

"Was the King solicitous that the Halle students should acquire a knowledge of German dramatic art? Did the King do anything to help this German dramatic art? On June 21, 1771, we find the wise king of Prussia in quite a different frame of mind, storming against the Berlin theatrical company that had played in Halle in the following terms: 'His Highness the King of Prussia, etc., in consequence of the great disorders caused by the Döbbelin theatrical company in Halle, is still further confirmed in his opinion that public theatrical performances are quite unsuited to towns and localities in which young people are to be trained for the service of the State. Such performances only induce these young people to squander their time and money to no purpose, and interfere with the good discipline so necessary in these nurseries of youth. For these reasons, and out of loyal consideration for his country, His Majesty desired that such performances shall no longer be

allowed either at his universities or in their vicinity.' (147) This royal ban of excommunication was expressly directed against the Dobbelin theatrical company. And was the latter inferior to the company which was enjoying the King's powerful protection in 1745? Or had the Prussian students, after thirty years of the King's 'magnificent and discriminating promotion of culture,' become still worse hooligans? The truth is that the Dobbelin theatrical company outlawed by the King had overcome all the impediments of the royal censorship and performed Lessing's *Minna von Barnhelm*—in German!—with such unparalleled success that the piece was performed nineteen times in twenty-two days, and the inhabitants of the capital began to acquire an enthusiasm for German art." (148) What a monstrous crime! Ten years before Frederick's dissertation! Frederick's decree that 'public theatrical performances are quite unsuited to towns and localities in which young people are to be trained for the service of the State' was therefore directed against the Dobbelin Company. Does it not make your blood boil? But 'Herr Francke, or whatever the rascal's name may be' was appointed by the King Consistorial Councillor.

"Do you imagine that Frederick II. did anything to encourage the development of the theatre in Berlin? Preuss goes on to give a detailed description of a typical royal visit to the theatre: 'The King entered the Opera House to the warlike sound of trumpets, surrounded by his generals and officers, and seated himself in the front row of the stalls, half of which were filled by common (thrashed!) soldiers commandeered from all the regiments; frequently he leant over the barrier separating the orchestra from the floor of the house, and examined the music in front of the conductor. From time to time the King, and the King alone, clapped his approval of the orchestra or of a singer.'

"All this seems to me the most repulsive, baroque perversity. Do not tell me that Frederick was too old to be capable of sympathy with the vigorous development of German dramatic art. The great Neuber was fifteen years older than Frederick II.; her pupil, Koch, who opened his theatre in the Behren-

strasse, Berlin, in 1771 with a brilliant performance of Lessing's *Sara Sampson*, was nine years older than Frederick II.

" 'The cultured society of Berlin could only enjoy all these splendid talents in the most humble and restricted premises—in sheds, in the town hall, in outhouses,' (149) while the King sat in his immense opera house (one of the biggest in the world) in front of commandeered soldiers, and listened to bad imitations of Italian music. Prussian 'national life!' The building was too large for plays, so 'in 1775 Frederick built for his French actors in the middle of the Gendarmenmarkt a theatre with the inscription: *Ridentur et corrigentur mores* (! ?), which could accommodate 1200 people, but only enjoyed a brief existence, owing to the competition of the German theatre.' Frederick's *Directeur des Spectacles* tried to breathe life into this still-born French theatre by giving a performance of *Minna de Barnhelm* in French! But despite this Frederician stratagem the theatre was a hopeless failure.

" Ranke tries to explain a kindred circumstance by the King's ignorance, and says: '... the Berlin Academy continued to speak French. This was strongly resented even in the immediate environment of the Academy, but the King remained quite unconscious of the fact.' (150)

" But Frederick's annoyance was greater than his ignorance of popular sentiment. When the theatrical director finally suggested trying to entice the Berliners into the empty French theatre of their great King by means of pantomimes, Frederick replied in French: 'No, I will not allow pantomimes; there are already too many spectacles in Berlin.' Later he availed himself of the 'potato war' as a pretext for abandoning his French theatre. The excuse with which he tried to cover his defeat: 'The present juncture is threatening more serious events; comedies may very well be dispensed with,' is misinterpreted by ill-informed commentators as a pearl of royal wisdom; as though this fatal potato war, which made of Goethe an active conspirator against Frederick II., meant anything else for Prussia than an opportunity for many thousands of Frederick's ill-treated soldiers, in spite of their service

in the opera, to run away in whole companies beneath the very eyes of their King." (151)

Hegemann: "You do not appear to realise that the warlike spirit of Prussia has nothing to do with comedy."

Manfred: "Frederick ordered operas to be performed on various occasions during the war, and even in the gardens of Sanssouci he had improvements carried out during the Seven Years' War; on such things he spent more than Maria Theresa, who even in the midst of the Seven Years' War showed more appreciation of the theatrical requirements of a great city than did Frederick II. a year before the beginning of his shameful potato war. 'There are too many spectacles in Berlin,' said Frederick II. in 1777. On the other hand, when in Vienna in 1759 the two German theatres were in financial straits, the far-sighted Maria Theresa wrote (in German): 'There must be spectacles; they cannot be dispensed with in a great capital like this. Both the theatres must be continued; and I allot 150,000 gulden for this purpose.' (152) In these two theatres were performed the wholly or partially extemporised 'art comedies' as well as the serious German drama commended by Gottsched. In Vienna pulsed that life from which the German theatre took its rise, and which justified Hofmannsthal in the assertion that for the last hundred and fifty years Vienna and Paris had been the first theatrical cities in the world. Was this not worth more than the so-called victories of Leuthen and Hochkirch?"

One of the company interposed: "How you do exaggerate the importance of these things!"

Manfred: "It was Frederick the Great who declared that he would rather have composed a good play, such as *Athalie*, which was written for Louis XIV., than have won the victories of the Seven Years' War. But my intention was merely to demonstrate that those Prussian historians who try to exalt their Frederick 'the Great' by pouring scorn on far superior monarchs, such as Augustus the Strong, Maria Theresa and Louis XIV., land themselves in absurd contradictions."

Hegemann: "Do you then consider that German history books are unjustified in representing Louis XIV. as filled with

an arrogant love of splendour, without regard to the interests of his people ? ”

Manfred: “Treitschke speaks in a tone of moral superiority of ‘Louis XIV.’s kingdom of courtly splendour and self-idolatry,’ but in regard to Frederick II.’s New Palace and his vain ‘Have not my verses something of the easy flow of Racine’s ?’ he is silent.”

Hegemann: “Does not the shameful treatment which Molière, Racine and other intellectual giants suffered at the hands of Louis XIV. confirm Treitschke’s view ? Did not Louis perhaps really prefer the coarseness and obscenities of Scarron, while for Molière and Racine he felt no more than casual indifference ? ”

Manfred: “One could really wish there were some truth in that base rumour of the outrage on Molière and Louis’ alleged sanction of it ! What a romantic story of the sincere repentance and atonement of Louis XIV. might then be built up from it ! Just picture in your mind the sequence of events. Imagine the youthful Louis, infatuated with the popular theatre and the savage burlesques of Scarron ; then he makes friends with Molière ; the no longer despised actor supplants the court jester, whom Louis had kept in his early days, like a mediæval prince or like the Emperor in the second part of *Faust*. Louis is enchanted by Molière’s comedies, and draws his attention to certain absurd courtiers, whom Molière, at the King’s request, immortalises in his satires and comedies. Louis makes no secret of his admiration for Molière ; he invites the once despised comedian to sit at his table, and calls out to the astonished courtiers: ‘I am here to wait on Molière, whose company was not good enough for you.’ The courtiers defend themselves with all the weapons afforded by malice and court-intrigues against Molière’s inexhaustible and remorseless ridicule. The Prince de Conti, once a schoolfellow and then a patron of Molière, writes a violent attack on Molière’s *Ecole des Maris*. There begins such a duel of wits as was never perhaps waged with greater passion, certainly never upon a prouder stage or by prouder combatants. Boileau comes to the aid of his friend Molière with a famous poem. Molière

himself brings on the stage his *Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes*, in which he attacks afresh and with even more bitterness the courtiers and—so subsequent tradition maintains—in particular, the foolhardy Comte de la Feuillade. Then is said to have occurred that famous outrage on Molière committed by La Feuillade or by a prince (perhaps Conti), as another account suggests, after—so it is alleged—the King had abandoned the poet. (Other reports, on the contrary, go to prove that La Feuillade's blows, foolhardy as they often were, struck the mighty rather than the weak. Or did he already perceive in Molière one of the mighty ? ! ) And what then ? No one is secure against the attacks of these mad young nobles ; that may be. The question remains : Do their attacks go unpunished ? Was the poet, as Brandes maintains, without rights and without means of defence ? No ! For never did any one revenge himself more abundantly than did Molière on those marquises from whose arrogance he had suffered, whatever form their ill-will may have taken. It was not Molière who was defenceless. On the contrary, every one—high and low alike—was defenceless, if the most witty moralist of all the ages saw fit to chastise him. Molière must have been quite sure of the King's support ; otherwise he would never have dared to avenge himself on these powerful marquises. He immediately produced his *Impromptu de Versailles*, the most uncompromising, the most crushing of all his satires. Molière had already made the marquises ridiculous ; now he showed that there was nothing more ridiculous than a marquis. What in the world would become of comedy, asked the poet, if there were no marquises, who seem to have been born for no other purpose than to act as fools for other men to laugh at ? And the first performance of this comedy was given, not at one of the Paris theatres, but before the King at Versailles. Picture these noble lords, who, in accordance with the custom of that time, regarded it as their privilege to sit on the right and left of the stage. The actors could declaim these satires in their very face, and point their fingers at the individual held up for ridicule and at the absurdities of his costume and carriage. There has been nothing like it since Aristophanes. And

Louis XIV. laughed and protected the poet against open attacks. The flood of malicious calumny loosed against Molière knew no bounds; that he was the subject of insulting comedies goes without saying; that he was declared to be the father of his young wife is perhaps not so offensive as it sounded at that time; for perhaps it is true: Armande was perhaps an Antigone. But attempts were made to attack Molière in what may have been a more sensitive spot: his wife was decried as a public prostitute, and a crushing accusation against Molière was handed to the King. The King and his sister-in-law (the predecessor of Liselotte of the Pfalz) replied by acting as sponsors for Molière's new-born son. The duel between the poet and the world raged on and assumed forms at once more savage and more historically significant. For Molière was not prepared merely to provide the court with tranquil entertainment, with such tragi-comic ballets as *Psyche*, in which he collaborated with Corneille, Quinault and Lulli—not such a bad company! He was the great moralist of the age—perhaps I should say of our time. In any case it was then that the weapon of wit was forged, which Frederick II. all through his life sought in vain to wield.

“When I place Molière so high, it is only fair to admit that I have never made myself acquainted with the works of Ayrenhoff.”

Hegemann: “Ayrenhoff?”

Manfred: “You as a German must surely be acquainted with this great Viennese rival of Molière.”

Hegemann: “I am not very well up in Viennese local patriotism.”

Manfred: “This negligence is not only a slight to the great Ayrenhoff, but also to the great Frederick, who in his profound and searching work—some people call it a libel—on German literature discovered that Ayrenhoff of Vienna had not been surpassed by Molière, although like the Germans who were eagerly devouring his words, he then bothered himself no further about his great discovery.

“Well, that is how matters stand with Molière, whose historic struggle on behalf of religious freedom in Paris excited

more passion than the undying fame, which Frederick the Great conferred upon the author of the *Mail Train*, excited among the indifferent Germans. And now for Molière's struggle :

## "TARTUFFE" AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

"Blow followed blow, and the conflict was waged mainly around *Tartuffe*, Molière's great attack on religious intolerance, a conflict which I firmly believe to have been of more present importance and more future consequence than the Thirty Years' War. Certainly it concerned a great political question. Again and again the King witnessed performances of the uncompleted drama ; again and again the so-called pious party—for the most part the party of the intolerant—succeeded in inducing the King to refuse permission for its public performance. The King's hesitation seems to me not cowardice but moral earnestness in a terribly serious question. Louis XIV. was not an irresponsible chatterbox, whose jibes at religion were listened to with the patient indifference displayed by the Prince de Ligne as the guest of Frederick II. Outwardly the poet contended for permission for the public performance of *Tartuffe* ; inwardly he racked his brains for a worthy conclusion to his terrible indictment. The issue of the external struggle could not fail to influence the result of the inward struggle. When Molière had finally triumphed over the party of the intolerant and received permission for public performance, his sense of gratitude to the King overflowed, and he gave to his play that conclusion, which Lessing has imitated in *Minna von Barnhelm* : the hand of a great and wise king decides the conflict for the good cause :

*Nous vivons sous un prince ennemi de la fraude . . .  
Il donne aux gens de bien une gloire immortelle  
D'un fin discernement sa grande âme pourvue  
Sur les choses toujours jette une droite vue . . .*

"That has a different ring from Goethe's subsequent : 'I feel no more pity, sympathy, hope nor indulgence on this head,' and his invitation to Knebel : 'Strive to take up your



cross.' In Molière we have a cry of victory, a cry of contentment and gratitude towards a prince, who had recognised, exalted and protected him, who had helped to victory the great cause of the mind, and had ensured to the poet a truly undying glory. On the other hand, the imitation of this happy ending in the last act of *Minna von Barnhelm* symbolised a petition addressed by Lessing to Frederick II., the non-fulfilment of which mortified the petitioner and drove him from the country. No king spoke to Lessing as did the king in his play to Major von Tellheim: 'I should be loth to lose a man of your courage and opinions'; and yet never was a nobler request submitted more nobly by a nobler man than was Lessing's request for the sympathy of the king with the art of his people. Never would the granting of a request have been more advantageous to its recipient; but it was not until some years later that *Minna de Barnhelm* was performed at Frederick's theatre in the *Gens d'armes-Markt*—translated into French! Hamlet in the costume of a Prussian lieutenant of the Guards or Iphigenia in the uniform of the Salvation Army would not have been in worse taste."

Hegemann "You certainly paint an attractive picture of the much-abused Louis XIV. But are not you forgetting that Molière's noble struggle on behalf of toleration did not prevent the revocation of the Edict of Nantes?"

Manfred: "Possibly it never would have been revoked, if Molière had not by that time succumbed to his afflictions, or if he had had a worthy successor. The burden which a man of genius has to bear is cruelly heavy: Molière broke down beneath it, and there was no one to replace him. I have already remarked that Molière's struggle was one of the most pregnant with historic consequence that has ever been waged, and certainly no Prussian has the right to complain of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes! What would have become of Prussia, if the Huguenot refugees had not brought to her enslaved masses a little dignity, intelligence and nobility? The fact that these Frenchmen, who were the only tutors of Frederick when he was Crown Prince, were not more successful, and, owing to his lack of any spiritual anchorage, converted

him into an inveterate imitator of the French, ought not to be placed to their discredit in a court such as that of Frederick William I.”

Hegemann: “The German people purchased religious toleration by the sacrifices of a ‘Thirty Years’ War, and the German princes, who hospitably gave shelter to the men whom intolerance had driven from France——”

Manfred: “. . . did not suspect that the refugees whom they had harboured would not only remain true to their ungentle mother-country but would win over to her side the most warlike prince in Germany and induce him to fight all his life against France’s enemy, the German Emperor? But as regards the ‘Thirty Years’ War and religious toleration in Germany. The Hohenzollerns needed above all things settlers for their sandy territory. They preferred Protestants, as Louis XIV. preferred Catholics.”

Hegemann: “Surely there was religious toleration in the Prussia of Frederick the Great, whereas Louis XIV.—Molière or no Molière—drove the Huguenots out of France.”

Manfred: “Yes, Frederick thought that the Jesuits would bring money, and therefore he befriended them when the rest of the world was persecuting them. But religious freedom? His historiographer Preuss (153) feels himself compelled ‘to speak the truth,’ and asserts ‘that the great King was too Protestant, perhaps in fact too religious; for he filled the offices of state by preference with evangelicals, and was unwilling to confer positions in the civil service of the state on his Catholic subjects.’ From many offices of state and from the academic professorships he excluded the Catholics. Jews were exiled by Frederick as he thought fit (154); he drove 4000 out of West Prussia at one stroke.”

“The rest of Frederick II.’s religious toleration is the toleration of French enlightenment and of Voltaire, behind which stand the sceptics of the French Regency and finally Molière and his friends. Lisclotte wrote from Paris in 1698: ‘I am quite of your opinion that every one in his own sense has *son petit religion apart soy*,’ and in 1706 she quotes the declaration of the King of Siam, which she had read in a report

by some French missionaries : ' that one might find happiness in all religions.' When such utterances were afterwards exalted by Frederick II. to the rank of supreme Prussian political wisdom (imaginative Prussians even attribute their authorship to this most unimaginative king), they no longer expressed the buddhist, pantheistic piety of the Siamcse king, but Mazarin's undisguised contempt for humanity. Cardinal Mazarin's ' Argue, but obey,' was introduced by Frederick II. into the realm of religion, where what it amounted to was practically : My subjects are defenceless ; their religion is therefore a matter of no importance. The religious toleration of the Peace of Westphalia was Cardinal Richelieu's legacy to the Germans, and the import of this fatal gift is : Religious toleration is good for Germany, for it makes Germany politically divided and defenceless against France. How many French diplomats have since that date urged upon the Germans the defence of their ' germanic liberties ' as their most sacred duty ! And the Electors of Brandenburg succeeded, as the defenders and agents of Richelieu and of Mazarin's Peace of Westphalia, in tearing asunder the German Empire, in order that upon its ruins—after the loss of Alsace, Lorraine, Flanders, Austria, Hungary, Bohemia, and much else that was necessary if Germany were to rank as a great power—Frederick's successors might subsequently play at being a German great power : ' We ape the great powers, without being one of them,' said Frederick II., and he stretched his Prussians still more tightly on the procrustean bed of militarism, in order that his aping might for a time wear a semblance of reality. In order to be true to the Frederician tradition, the German Empire would at the present day have to keep a standing army of almost three million men. If there was anything calculated to mislead Louis XIV. in regard to religious freedom, which prior to 1685 was far more in evidence in his kingdom than it was in the German Empire of the Peace of Westphalia, it was the wantonness with which the German Electors, under the shelter of the ' freedom ' they had received from Richelieu, ' made head against the imperial power by fighting shoulder to shoulder with France ' ; in these words Frederick II., in the testament of

1752, recommends to his successor the alliance with France against the German Emperor. A great national king was bound to defend himself against such risks in his own country ; security against internal enemies is part of the essence of the state, and—since Louis XIV.—of the modern state also.

## LOUIS XIV. AND RACINE

“ With what kingly seriousness and true dignity Louis XIV. addressed himself to religious questions is not only clear from the incidents connected with Molière’s *Tartuffe*, but is also recorded on an honourable page in the history of Louis’s relations to Racine. For Louis not only knew and protected all the great writers of his kingdom, but the most distinguished among them were his intimate friends. How full of significance and of matter for grim historic mirth is the record of Louis’s friendship with Racine ! Louis helped to discover the young Racine and defended his works against the voice of unfriendly public opinion, and defended and supported him with justice. Racine’s character has been called into question by the moderns. That current of the world which is said to form the character of the poet surged in Versailles more mightily than in Weimar ; but Racine was just as well able to accommodate himself to the great world as was Goethe a hundred years later to the hubbub of his petty court. The mood of Racine and the mood of Goethe at this period of their several lives are akin : ‘ I have already become half a courtier, a fairly tedious business to a man of my tastes,’ wrote Racine (1663) after one of the King’s levers. It reads like a description of Goethe, when a contemporary courtier writes of Racine : ‘ For a man who has risen from nothing, he has soon mastered the manners of the court. The actors had given him a wrong notion of them ; he has remedied this, and he is to be met everywhere, even at the King’s bedside, where he often has the honour of reading aloud, which he can do better than any one,’ better perhaps than de Prades, de Catt, and those other readers to whom Frederick the Great used to read. In the year 1677, during Louis XIV.’s second war of conquest,

*Phèdre* was completed, and was a failure, owing to the machinations of Racine's enemies. Racine retired from the theatre, returned to those pious instructors of his youth and enemies of the theatre, the Jansenists, and married a pious and industrious wife, who made him happy and who did not even know the titles of the sinful tragedies of her husband. The King paid the poet an annual salary, and made him, when he had abandoned the tragic muse, his royal historiographer. For a brief period the King and his friend, Madame de Maintenon, were successful in enticing back Racine to the poetic art. At their request the poet wrote in 1689 and 1691 his two religious plays, and then relapsed into silence when the last—his masterpiece—again encountered opposition at court,—not from the King, but from the extreme pious party, and could only be played before a restricted audience for Madame de Maintenon and the King. The wider success of this play did not begin until 1699, the year of Racine's death. In the appreciation of this great tragedy, *Athalie*, Louis XIV. was again in advance of his time, although—or perhaps because—he had undergone a similar religious conversion to that of Racine before him. While Racine reverted to the Jansenism of his youth, however, the King became a strict Catholic. Although Racine insisted on this contrast perhaps more than was necessary, the friendship between poet and king remained unimpaired. From 1696 Racine had apartments allotted to him at Versailles. As the relations between the three sexagenarians—Madame de Maintenon was three years older than the King, Racine a year younger—became more intimate, those absurd and distressing scenes between the poet and the King, of which one hears so much, are said to have been enacted. But Saint-Simon's untrustworthiness on this head is capable of demonstration, although his stories concerning Louis XIV. and Racine are so admirably invented that one would be loth to lose them. Even supposing that the King had—as Georg Brandes would have us believe—been somewhat to blame in relation to Molière, did he not do penance for this sin against the Holy Ghost (I refer to Molière) in the most generous fashion—or, shall one say? in the most moving or in the most absurd fashion? Is it possible

to conceive anything more comic than the *Roi-Soleil*, who in 1685 became religious and—by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes—one of the greatest persecutors of the Christians of all time, and who in the same year, in spite of the loud abuse of *Liselotte*, and in spite of the bitter opposition of his other relations, took to wife the old Huguenot and much-slandered widow of the writer of farces, *Scarron*, and then reigned with her for thirty years in uninterrupted marital harmony? For *Madame de Maintenon* did reign with the King, although with inimitable tact she tried to conceal the fact that the latter, who above all things could not endure petticoats in politics, deigned to make an exception in her case. The King worked from eight to nine hours daily (perhaps he thought: ‘I have no time—to be a poet’?); all the ministerial sessions were held in their room. No ministers came on Friday, but in their place *Racine* was frequently invited. The King is said on one of these occasions to have asked the poet: ‘What is the reason that no more good comedies have been written since *Molière*?’ And *Racine* is said to have answered like an absent-minded scholar: ‘What hope is there for the French stage, now that the public taste has been ruined beyond repair by *Scarron*’s indecencies?’ At this the grey-haired queen, *Scarron*’s widow (the burial expenses of her first husband are reported to have been left unpaid) is said to have blushed, while *Racine* relapsed into embarrassed silence, and then after a brief interval *Louis* asked the poet whether he really wanted to do some more work that evening. *Racine* is said never to have got over the displeasure of his King—who from that day never addressed another word to him, and to have died of grief soon after. There is another story—adopted by *Voltaire* and by the school textbooks—regarding the causes of this royal displeasure, but this too has been proved to be erroneous, or at any rate extremely doubtful. *Louis XIV.* is said to have found in the hands of *Madame de Maintenon* a memorial regarding the sufferings of the lower classes of the population, which *Racine* had composed at her request. When the King learnt the name of the author—which she had promised not to betray—he is said to have exclaimed: ‘Does *Racine* imagine that because he is a great poet he can also be

minister ?' And his grief at the King's displeasure is said to have hastened Racine's end, just as the great Vauban is said to have died of chagrin, when his important proposal for a more just distribution of the taxes excited the King's displeasure. It is now established beyond a doubt that the occasional cooling of the friendship between Louis XIV. and Racine was only due to the firmness or obstinacy with which Racine upheld his Jansenist convictions against the Catholic convictions of the King ; also that, in spite of this, the friendship persisted until the death of the poet, who enjoyed to the last all the advantages which their friendship entailed. Boileau, another distinguished poet included in the circle of Louis's friends, writes that the King grew so melancholy when he heard the news of Racine's death ' that the courtiers would all have been glad to die if they could hope that the King would pay them a like honour.'

" Thus a study of the greatest age of French literature proves that a King can bring blessings to literature. Frederick II. boasted that he had done the greatest service to German literature by intellectually expatriating himself, and emulating in the intellectual domain that absenteeism which has proved so dangerous in the economic domain. And, in view of his temperament and of his defective education, this may have been the best that he was capable of ; but Louis XIV. succeeded in doing something better."

### LOUIS XIV. AND BERNINI.

Hegemann : " Are you not doing an injustice to Frederick the Great when you compare him in literary matters with Louis XIV., who was firmly rooted in the language of his people, whereas Frederick had unfortunately been uprooted from the language of his ? "

Manfred : " Well, if you propose to condone this lack of roots—or should one say lack of a fatherland ?—in the King of Prussia, let me remind you of Louis XIV.'s experience with the great Bernini, the architect of the imperishable St. Peters Square in Rome. There you have a worthy relation between a great King and a world-famed foreign artist. It is tempting

to compare this relation with Frederick II.'s relations with Voltaire. Voltaire was eighteen years older than Frederick II. ; Bernini was forty years older than Louis XIV. Frederick and Louis were both about twenty-seven years old when they first met the much-courted foreigners, Voltaire and Bernini ; they were consequently not then in the position in which Louis stood towards Racine or, at any rate to a certain extent, Charles Augustus towards Goethe. The royal admirers of Bernini and Voltaire did not choose so much as confirm the choice of the world. In Paris as in Prussia the great King and the great artist were mutually enchanted with one another. Bernini and Voltaire both wrote letters home filled with praise of their royal admirers. But the great difference between the true French and the would-be French King soon made itself evident. Whereas Frederick's contempt for everything German knew no bounds, Louis, although he ranked the great Italian above the French architects and sculptors, would not sanction any slight upon his country's honour. Bernini thought and spoke about French art much as Voltaire spoke about German literature. Frederick sought to outdo Voltaire in this, while Louis—for all his deference to the artistic judgments of the Italian master—gratified the French by saying before the assembled court : 'Half-an-hour's conversation with the great Bernini has enabled me to perceive in him a man who is resolved to find no good in anything French.' Very much as Frederick II. and Voltaire even in the last quarter of the eighteenth century could find little to praise in the whole German language and literature and would like to have reconstructed it entirely on the French model (the *dissertation* is a clumsy suggestion how this should be achieved), Bernini would have liked to raze to the ground all the palatial buildings which the French kings had erected round the Louvre, so that all obstacles should be removed to the execution of his new Italian plans. Louis opposed this suggestion, and Bernini came to the conclusion : '... I should acquire greater fame here' (thus he wrote to the Duke of Modena), 'if I could build a large and imposing castle, without pulling down anything. King Louis informed me very graciously that it was not a question of the cost, but that he



should regret the necessity of pulling down what his ancestors had set up. In the case of Frederick II., the efforts of Luther and Leibniz on behalf of the language and literature of the Germans might well be compared with this 'what his ancestors had set up.' When subsequently Bernini seemed to have adapted himself to the French demands—though far from sufficiently, as later experience showed—his great plan for the new Louvre was approved by Louis and the execution of it was embarked upon. Bernini returned to the service of the Pope, after having been generously rewarded, and won as much fame by his French success as Voltaire won by his Potsdam failure. But the consequences of Bernini's stay in Paris were infinitely more important than the visits of Voltaire to Berlin, and the reason for this vast difference is to be sought in the fact that in Paris the French opponents of the Italian, Bernini—with the great Perrault at their head—succeeded in winning the ear of Louis XIV., while in Berlin the German opponents of Voltaire—with Lessing at their head—were contemptuously thrust aside by Frederick. 'I can get on without Germans!' exclaimed Frederick triumphantly, when he had sent for an insignificant French cleric in place of Lessing, who had been strongly recommended to him. In Paris the execution of Bernini's plan for the Louvre was soon abandoned, and in its place was erected Perrault's great Louvre façade, with its colonnade, which far excels Bernini's design and with which the noble and serious but never ponderous grace of the new French architecture begins its triumphal progress, and celebrates the victory of the classic over the baroque—already in 1667! (an important event, which—incidentally—Frederick II. never grasped, and even sought to belie with his baroque library). Frederick II. remained capriciously and incorrigibly obsessed during the remaining thirty years of his life with the fixed idea that in the wit of Voltaire was to be found the panacea for the weaknesses of German intellectual life. Further, the similarity between the fruitful visit of Bernini to Paris and Voltaire's unfruitful adventure in Berlin is particularly striking, because Perrault, who led French architecture to its victory over the Italian, was none the less profoundly influenced by Bernini, and because the

fundamental features of the famous façade of his French Louvre—the simple base, and on it the symmetrical order of columns rising to the height of two storeys, and the screening of the roof by attic, moulding and parapet—are essentially a further development of Bernini's suggestions. Similarly, Lessing is in many respects an emancipated pupil of Voltaire, \*just as the author of *Götz*, on whom Frederick lavished his abuse, also admitted that he 'owed such a large part of his own education to the French.' If Lessing had received encouragement from Frederick II., from *Minna von Barnhelm* there might have been developed a Prusso-German theatre, which would have preserved all that Germany could gain from Voltaire and the French; and Goethe's 'delusion that it is possible to develop a German theatre,' (155) would perhaps have ceased to be a delusion. The gratitude which Frederick the Great would thereby have earned would be boundless, the increase in the power of the Prussian idea would have been inestimable. Even at the present day German comedy is frequently cumbered with half-understood and therefore foolish and worthless borrowings from the French, whereas the great stimulus which France derived from Italian art won for French art a glorious and world-wide fame. This is in no way invalidated by the fact that Bernini's visit hastened the foundation of the important French Academy in Rome, and therewith strengthened the Italian influence. On the contrary, France derived from the contact with Italy, the mother-country of our art, much of that power and superiority which Goethe valued more and more as he grew older, while present-day Germany is apt to conclude over-hastily that she no longer lags behind France in these respects.

Yet I believe that this superiority not only still exists, but may prove a decisive factor in many intellectual decisions of the future, however hopelessly France may have been outstripped in the domain of practical politics."

## THOMAS MANN'S ANTITHESIS OF POWER AND INTELLECT

Thomas Mann : " I am distressed when I think of Goethe's prophecy : ' Several centuries may yet elapse before so much intellect and higher culture penetrate to our countrymen and become general that it will be possible to say of them : it is a long time since they were barbarians.' "

Manfred : " My debt of gratitude to Germany, both by reason of my descent on my mother's side and also on account of Goethe's works, is so great that I recall with no little distress and with regretful sympathy the words which Nietzsche added to the words of Goethe just quoted : ' They live in the delusion that they have a genuine culture. . . . But with this kind of culture, which is no more than a phlegmatic insensibility to culture, no enemies can be subdued, least of all those who, like the French, have a genuinely productive culture, no matter what its value ; moreover we have hitherto copied the French in everything, for the most part very clumsily.' "

Thereupon Thomas Mann tried to explain Frederick II.'s lack of sympathy with Lessing in a mysterious way. Reverting to a hint which he had thrown out at the beginning of the conversation, he said : " There is a specific German antithesis of power and intellect ; viewed in the light of history, these two—power and intellect—seem to avoid one another in Germany, as though in obedience to some law ; the heyday of political power and the heyday of culture seem to exclude one another in Germany, and consequently artists and believers in culture have inevitably been confirmed in the conviction that a politically powerful Germany was necessarily antagonistic to intellect and culture. When Goethe defined culture as ' the intellectualization of the political and military,' he was thinking of it as a whole, measuring phenomena by a general standard, and fixing his sovereign gaze far beyond German conditions and actualities. None the less, the high validity of his definition of culture justifies the assumption or the hope that German unbelief in the possibility of a synthesis of power and spirit is an

unbelief based on prejudice. Perhaps it is nowhere written that as things generally have been so they must always be ; that Germany must not crave for power if she craves for intellect. And after all, this or that form of state and society is either suited to a people or unsuited. The people is either apt for it or not ; ' ripe ' for it, it will never be."

Manfred answered in his usual courteous tone, which made it so difficult to take offence at his words : " You spoke of the ' heyday of culture.' Please do not be offended if I compare you with Frederick the Great, who indeed painted Prussian culture in the blackest colours, and through all his rule over slaves and his four civil wars scarcely witnessed a ' heyday of culture,' but who on various occasions assured the French General Bonillé that ' the French were not ripe for free government,' and who said the same about his own Prussia. From this unripeness there ensued in France the grim necessity of the revolution. And if in Germany any one proposed to deduce from this unripeness that what you call ' antagonism to intellect and culture ' must be accepted and upheld as an abiding political and social characteristic of Germany, one might reply in the words of the conservative Grillparzer : ' Better the most frightful democracy than that the intellect should be enslaved and the noblest cravings of humanity sacrificed to a horrible system of stability.' You said at the beginning of this conversation : ' The existence of Frederick II. was a heavy and degrading burden upon all.' Perhaps one ought to ask : Was it not with something very like this ' heavy and degrading burden '—the crutch-stick and the floggings—that the lords of Brandenburg, and their scarcely more enlightened imitators in the Empire, forced upon the German people the form of government to which you refer, with its antagonism to intellect and culture ?

## DRYDEN

After a short silence following this semi-rhetorical question, I remarked :

“ Permit me to revert once more to those flogged poets of whom we were just now speaking. Georg Brandes also referred yesterday to the famous English poet Dryden, the author of *Alexander's Feast*, as a victim of aristocratic insolence ; the Earl of Rochester is said to have had him thrashed by his negro. You will readily understand that as a German I should prefer to think that in other countries too the great intellectuals have suffered ill-treatment, rather than have to admit that this phenomenon was peculiarly characteristic of Germany.”

Manfred : “ If you derive consolation from the universal prevalence of the anti-intellectuals, you need only recall the public ill-treatment, with which not so very long ago the aristocratic nationalist party in Paris tried to humiliate Zola. But it would really be an insult to the Earl of Rochester or the Duke of Buckingham—who is also reported to have thrashed the poet Dryden—to compare them with Frederick II. or his deputies, his whipping-boys, who tried to forbid *Minna von Barnhelm*, imprisoned for life the gifted author of *Matinées du roi de Prusse*, (156) or, at the royal command, thrashed anti-Prussian journalists in Cologne or Erlangen. The Duke of Württemberg, too, who maltreated J. J. Moser and Schubart, would probably have been dubbed by the two English lords—in the language of Walter Scott's Norman barons—a ‘ Saxon swine ’ ; and they would have deprecated comparison with him, just as Baron vom Stein deprecated comparison between himself and the aristocrats of Brandenburg and Further Pomcrania. Moreover, those who believe in German progress should bear in mind that the misconduct of the Duke of Württemberg occurred almost a hundred years after Dryden's misadventure. The story that the Duke of Buckingham thrashed Dryden for his impertinence and then gave him a purse of gold for his wit has been proved untrue. It is true, however, that Buckingham,

who was himself a poet and a wit, fought Dryden with his own weapon and wrote a very good lampoon against him. Dryden, the great master of the English language, was unusually free from narrow-mindedness, and was so averse, in important intellectual disputes, from wielding his pen in the service of only one of the contending parties, that he has frequently been reproached with lack of intellectual dignity. He was not one of those blockheads referred to warningly by Emerson, who never learn anything fresh and are therefore always of the same opinion. His mind was very receptive, and perhaps not merely his mind. He was as skilful as a clever barrister in defending the most difficult and contradictory issues, perhaps to the extent of offending against 'seemliness.' Even in his time the conflicts concerning the great questions of the English faith and the English constitution were waged far less with the crutch-stick than with the weapon of the intellect, and Dryden, in a fashion which to-day would be accounted unseemly, was to be found fighting now on the one side, now on the other. At one time he was writing on behalf of Cromwell, at another on behalf of the King; at first he was a Protestant, then—*cujus regio, eius religio*—he voluntarily became a Catholic. He strove with all his might towards intellectual perfection, and was at once a follower and imitator of Shakespeare and at the same time brilliantly successful in emulating the loftiness of French models. Yet this royal court poet diverted the population of London with pieces far more indecent than the 'platitudes' of Shakespeare and Goethe which Frederick II. despised—pieces which anticipate and cast as caviare before the general the obscenities which Frederick II. admired in the *Pucelle*. At this time in Prussia such obscenities were reserved exclusively for the King and his immediate environment, so that the corruption of the English nation might be the more indignantly denounced.

"Dryden wielded a caustic pen, and accepted at one time the patronage of the Earl of Rochester, at another that of the Duke of Buckingham. In the romantic conflicts which these two lords waged with one another, Dryden does seem to have been actually thrashed on one occasion by a pack of Rochester's

followers. In any case we find in the Earl of Rochester's imitation of a satire of Juvenal the question :

Who'd be a wit in Dryden's cudgelled skin ?

" If this was an impudent confession of guilt on the part of the Earl, he atoned for it by his death, which followed soon after. He died at the age of thirty-three years, a mental and physical wreck, and whatever may have been his guilt in respect of the incident with Dryden, there is something tragic, brilliant and even winning in the life of this Earl of Rochester, so that one might almost wish that every country, including Germany, were blessed with more of such noblemen. With amazing precocity, he completed his university studies when he was hardly more than a child, he travelled for three years in France and Italy, and distinguished himself in 1655, when he was eighteen years of age, by his valour in a naval battle against the Dutch. Then he became a royal favourite at the brilliant court of Charles II., though his satirical poems upon that monarch and his mistresses frequently brought down upon him the royal displeasure. That same offence, on account of which Schubart languished in a prison for ten years, was the favourite occupation of this witty courtier. He also wrote very good love-poems. Once he made an attack upon the coach of a wealthy and aristocratic young lady, from whom he had suffered a rebuff, and boldly attempted to abduct her. The King sent him to the Tower ; but the young lady changed her mind and married her audacious wooer. But even better than his love-poems are his satirical poems on the King, on the sovereign's weakness and ingratitude and on the excessive influence of the royal mistresses. The forbearance with which the King suffered these attacks was strongly disapproved by the royalists, but the King could not for long dispense with his friend, and his displeasure was never of more than brief duration. Yet the life of a courtier did not satisfy this talented Earl, not even at the brilliant court of Charles II. There is a touch of Bolingbroke and of Byron in many of these English lords. In Germany this race seems to have died out. Possibly Ulrich von Hutten belonged to it. Schubart's Duke of Württemberg did not

belong to it ; nor indeed was there any place for it in Prussia. Had there been in Prussia a public life capable of keeping ambitious revolutionaries in check, then perhaps Frederick II. might have been turned into quite a tolerable lord. As a noble rebel, he might then perhaps even have been forgiven by many for thrashing a fickle-minded writer. In a king, and in particular an 'enlightened' king, it is unpardonable. But Frederick was only exalted to kingship, a business for which, in my opinion, he had no qualifications, as a result of the defects of the German constitution. Many an English lord, who has been a far less troublesome member of his state, is to-day all too modest in claiming equal rank with the 'Kings' of the provinces or small states of Germany.

## SCHUBART AS COURT POET

"But it is not only the 'high personages' of Germany who are more uncouth or perhaps more coarse-grained than the Norman-French barons, but the German poets too seem to have been prevented by a sort of indolence from appreciating to the full such princes and nobles as God gave them. Schiller frankly admitted that he recoiled in dismay before the 'gigantic labour of idealising Frederick II.' Even Heine's poetic powers failed him in the face of these 'true masterpieces of the good God,' as he called them, and he could only make the pious declaration : 'No one can counterfeit these German princes ; not Shakespeare, not Raupach ; we see in them the finger of God.' Thus the Germans have not one adequate poetic appreciation of their great Frederick, unless Schubart's 'Hymn' may be regarded as adequate.

"On the whole, Schubart's lot seems to me symbolic of the attitude and the fate of the German poets. Schubart was, it is true, in so far to blame, that he attacked crowned heads 'in the most outrageous manner,' to quote the order for his arrest, but, after he had been thrown into prison without a trial, he was allowed, after only a year of strict confinement, to receive visitors, including Schiller, who was strongly influenced by Schubart. Even when he was in prison, Schubart was able to



write plays for the court theatre of his duke, Charles Eugene. The intercession of princes and of distinguished writers was no more successful in securing Schubart's release than was the petition of Heidelberg University, but when Schubart had written his immortal 'Hymn' on the death of Frederick the Great, his release was granted at the request of the Prussian State. Five months later this release was confirmed to him from the mouth of the samemorganatic duchess, who had witnessed his imprisonment ten years earlier. Hence, after only one more week had passed, he could actually rejoice in his freedom. He returned to the capital of his tormentor, and devoted the rest of his life to pouring forth streams of poetic incense in the capacity of court poet. And rightly! As far as persistence was concerned, this Duke Charles Eugene even outdid Frederick the Great; that is to say, he reigned not a mere forty-six but fifty-six years. What a patriarchal blessing! What enlightenment for his people! His excesses, which were much more harmless than those of the warlike Frederick II., filled Schiller and many other poets with a burning hatred of tyrants. Schubart, who after having been ill-treated by the Duke, celebrated him in verse, was incidentally one of the most revered and impassioned champions of German greatness."

Hegemann: "Surely you are jesting? You do not really mean to suggest that Frederick the Great, even if he had been the guardian of Duke Charles Eugene, is for this reason to be held responsible for Schubart's ten years' imprisonment."

Manfred: "Frederick II. had already, by imprisoning for eighteen years his sister's supposed lover, furnished a precedent for every imaginable sort of tyranny. The details of this Frederician imprisonment are so revolting, that I had always taken it for granted that it must be some malicious backstairs libel, until I recently discovered that Bismarck, among the 'excesses of self-confidence' to be set down to the 'intellect and courage' of Frederick II. thinks it necessary to include this 'maltreatment of Trenck'."

Hegemann: "It is the first I have heard of it."

Manfred: "Do you think that Bismarck was indulging in mere heedless and irresponsible gossip? Perhaps it is only neces-

sary to refrain from speaking the truth, in order that Frederick II. may finally be purged of everything earthly or worse than earthly, and may shine forth triumphantly in the Prussian heavens as 'the Great.' Then Mephistopheles will once more pop up out of the prompter's niche, and will whisper into the ear of the author of the *dissertation sur la littérature allemande* the following lines from Schubart's hymn to Frederick the Great :

Love your Fatherland !  
In strong pure accents speak your heroes' speech !  
Nor by the aping of weak foreign fashions  
Turn the stout brazen bones to marzipan !

"This command is given to the docile Berliners by their great King, because he himself preferred to 'stammer in foreign accents' (as Klopstock put it), and because by his own confession he spoke German like a coachman : he gives this command in Schubart's loyal hymn, and this hymn is so loyal that it might have been composed by Koser himself or any Prussian historian. And because this hymn is loyal, what Schubart says in it regarding the rule of Frederick the Great is also true :

The muses basked again in Frederick's beams.  
He was himself their darling now as ever.  
As from amid the depths of primal night,  
Summoned of God, the suns were bodied forth ;  
So there arose the sages and the artists,  
And Berlin grew to be the queen of cities.

"No danger is threatened from the chamberlain, Goethe, with his key ; he avoided and avoids Berlin. We shall have no more : 'Explosion. Faust lies on the ground. The spirits are dissolved into vapour.'

"No, Schubart hit the truth exactly, for as early as October 3, 1752, Wilhelmina, Frederick's favourite sister, writing as an eye-witness, gives a similar description to that given by Schubart in his prison. She wrote to her great brother :

" ' You are resting now from the labours of Mars in the arms of the Muses, those clamorous sweethearts, who bestow their

favours on you and contend for yours. You preside among them like the Sultan in his seraglio. You have only to throw the handkerchief and they inspire you with their heavenly fire. They all come in turn—philosophy, poetry, music. The last will suggest to you new operas. Why do not the others bestow upon us a supplement to the *Works of the Philosopher of Sans-souci*, which deserve to be preferred before all the operas in the world ? ”

Hegemann : “ Do you think that you can make our great King appear ridiculous by holding him responsible for the foolishness of his sister ? ”

Manfred : “ Do not be alarmed. Wilhelmina is not describing a brothel. Frederick did as little harm to these sweet-hearts as to any others. He wrote from the camp of Kutenberg on June 10, 1742, with touching modesty :

*J'étois né pour les arts, nourrisson des neuf sœurs.*

But in less weak moments Frederick outdid with his own hand his sister's picture of the Sultan in his seraglio. He wrote to his friend Jordan from the field of war :

“ I am just about to write to the King of France, to compose a solo, to make some verses to Voltaire, to alter the army regulations and a hundred other things of this sort ” (157).

He had not only nine but a hundred muses, to whom he “ threw his handkerchief,” at the same time scattering in their eyes the snuff in which he had been copiously indulging.

“ Can you doubt any longer that Frederick the Great too was a master ‘ to whom every nymph pays duty ’ ? ”

## *THE SIXTH CONVERSATION*

### DEATH FOR THE FATHERLAND AND THE NOBILITY

Unseasonable patience merits contempt, the desire for a free world merits success, fearless resolution merits respect. But that the urge of necessity should not be named foolhardiness, and that noble desire should be called a virtue, and that to seek freedom, where one cannot find justice, should not be named defiance nor self-will—this, in a magnanimous world, is a matter of course.

From BARON FRIEDRICH VON DER TRENCK's account of his  
attempts to escape from Magdeburg written in 1759  
in blood (in German) in a bible.



ON the following day there were gathered once more in the Villa Boccanera some of the guests who had taken part in the first conversation and had since dispersed to Sorrento, Amalfi and Paestum. After lunch several of them were sitting on the terrace, when the manservant brought in a pile of newspapers—German, Italian, Greek, French and American. A discussion of political events was started, and the question was raised whether the Balkan War would extend beyond its own sphere. Manfred spoke with apprehension of the danger of a world war.

Lièvre and Zavitzianos had found a specially serious piece of news in a Greek newspaper. The poet Mabilis, with whom they were on terms of friendship, had fallen at the head of his volunteer corps. Zavitzianos translated for us the report in the Greek newspaper: "A shot through the mouth and another through the throat swept away the heroic poet, as he was trying to support our attack on Janina by the rash occupation of an advance position. The attempt failed owing to his death." Zavitzianos added: "If ever a sacrificial death was voluntary, it was certainly this death of Mabilis. I knew this man. He was aglow with the most fervent patriotism. I am sure that he sought death, because he believed that he could thereby set a beneficent example."

A German guest: "Theodore Körner too fell in a trivial outpost engagement. Do you not think that his heroic example, enhanced by his poems, brought infinite blessing to his nation? Do you not think that he achieved greater things than the son of Goethe, whose life his father safeguarded by not allowing him to enlist as a volunteer, as did Körner?"

Manfred: "Any act of Goethe is worth reflecting upon. How furiously did the Scottish clans once contend with one

another, and later what bitter war was waged between the Scotch and the English! Did the sacrificial courage with which they slaughtered and let themselves be slaughtered strengthen or weaken their country? Was it in the end harmful or beneficial to the cause of Great Britain? It is difficult to decide. Do you think, Zavitzianos, that your country will derive from the death of your friend, the poet Mabilis, such great and precious benefit as to outweigh the loss to its spiritual life resulting from his death?"

Zavitzianos: "It is difficult to decide. I believe that this war between the Greeks and the Turks is just as unfortunate as the never-ending squabbles between the Germans and the French, and as the conflicts between the Scotch and the English, now happily terminated. In all three cases heart and intellect could find a hundred reasons why these nations should live together on terms of brotherhood and mutual aid, and yet they turn and rend one another and offer up a frightful sacrifice. 'To whom is this sacrifice offered?'"

Manfred, who could not overcome the disappointment which Borchardt's *Alcestis* had caused him, answered promptly with a quotation from Borchardt's *Religious fear in the race ready to die*. "'Fear and readiness to die and writers who recommend them seem to abound everywhere in vast numbers. Less in evidence are pious fearlessness and the will to live, insight and power to discern the things that unite, and for their sake to forget the things that divide. There and not on the battlefield leaders are lacking. A noble will to live, inspired with sufficient insight and power to assert its claims in spite of the threats and warnings of the pessimists.' What does Borchardt say in his eulogy of aeolian antiquity? 'The seer, however, stood up, and uttered threats against cowards and weaklings, and then "there crashed over the sea a mighty thunder." Thereby it was proved that the young men must perish for the sake of atonement and sacrifice, necessity and sworn vow, salvation and victory.' That is fully as justified as the slaughter of Iphigenia on the altar. Tell me, Lièvre, since your tragedy was inspired by the observation of a real war, why did you make your Iphigenia perish on the altar? Why had she to die?"

Lièvre: "It is not my wish that she should die, but I cannot alter the fact that she must die; the necessity of her death is a fact which the Greek tragedians learnt from their forefathers, and which they then handed down to us. I desire the death of Iphigenia as little as I desire slavery or war. I cannot say that it is, was, or will be necessary to wage war, but it is a fact that it is being waged, that it has been waged and that it will continue to be waged."

Manfred: "Yes, it will be waged, so long as we allow ourselves to be instructed as to its necessity by the ancestors of the Greek tragedians, unless the Balkan War, whose lightning struck down the poet Mabilis, conjures up a world war, the results of which prove more frightful than were those of the Peloponnesian War for Greece."

The conversation drifted to politics, until it was ended by the general dispersal of the company, who wished to take advantage of the fine afternoon to make excursions.

In the late afternoon I met Manfred Ellis and Pastor Hans Dietrich<sup>1</sup> in the library. These two had been friends in their youth, but had not met for twenty years. As I give below merely excerpts from their conversation and have condensed Pastor's Dietrich's remarks more than those of Manfred, I may convey the impression that the former was excessively laconic, but I can assure the reader that this was by no means the case.

In the course of the conversation the famous cleric remarked:

"Really, Manfred, what you said this morning about war and death for one's country almost provoked me to contradiction. Did you mean to imply that there could be anything more glorious than to sacrifice one's life in the defence of one's fatherland?"

Manfred: "Defence is a vague term. During the Persian wars the Greeks developed the poetry of defence, and later turned it to account in one endless civil war by which they wrought their own destruction."

Pastor Dietrich: "Well then, call the wars of our great Frederick wars of aggression; yet did they not serve to promote

<sup>1</sup> Hans Dietrich is a fictitious name; the actual name is suppressed by request of the famous individual who bears it.



the welfare of the nation in the highest sense, and should not the fatherland therefore be grateful to the meanest grenadier who dared to sacrifice his life at that time ? ”

Manfred : “ No matter whether he dared or was compelled, his memory is sacred to me. I confess that I have often pondered over the state of mind of those brave soldiers. Will you accept Voltaire’s evidence ? ”

Pastor Dietrich : “ It depends what he says.”

Manfred : “ Among his works there is a poem, in which he urged his royal pupil—it was soon after the latter’s accession—to transfer to hospital a deserter who was doing forced labour. This deserter was a Frenchman six foot high, and a nobleman into the bargain. He was one of those tall fellows whom Frederick William I. pressed into his service, and for attempted desertion his ears and nose were slit, and he was forced to run the gauntlet thirty-six times.”

Pastor Dietrich : “ It is to Voltaire’s credit that he bears witness to Frederick’s milder rule. In fact, there is nothing for which one ought to be more grateful to Frederick the Great than for that spirit of leniency and enlightenment, which he was the first to introduce into the administration of the law and into army discipline at a time when in other countries a mediæval barbarity still prevailed in these spheres. Consider with what remorseless harshness men continued to be pressed into the English navy for a long time after that date.”

Manfred : “ Yes, one must be grateful to Frederick II. for the fact that his adherence to the notions which Voltaire had brought with him from England led him to abolish the use of torture immediately upon his accession to the throne. Yet many people have an erroneous conception of this abolition of torture. As a matter of fact before this time it was only rarely that recourse was had to torture, and it continued to be practised when the great King so willed. For instance, in 1748, in the midst of peace, Frederick II. sanctioned the torture of General Walrave on the rack (158), because he suspected this old and highly deserving officer of unlawful relations with the Emperor (159). It would be a mistake to imagine that Frederick II. adopted without reserve the teachings of French enlightenment

when they were opposed to his inclinations. It was also in time of peace that he ordered the Privy Councillor, Ferber, to be beheaded and his head stuck on a pole in Tartar fashion. To the disconsolate father of his victim he wrote: 'You cannot conceive what terrible and disgraceful crimes your son has been guilty of towards me' (160). It would be equally difficult to conceive Frederick II. as ruler of a constitutional state, or to discover what advantage the army, with its abominable recruiting and flogging system, derived from his boasted leniency. Voltaire was not pleased that his royal pupil, after the mid-day meal and the subsequent famous and much-disputed lovers' hour should like to watch from the window of his palace the running of the gauntlet, with which military offences were still punished during his reign."

Pastor Dietrich: "I believe that a great many of the statements concerning Frederick the Great made by Voltaire were malicious misrepresentations."

Manfred: "If you are loth to believe Voltaire, the Frenchman, you may perhaps be convinced by Malmesbury, the Englishman, and, if he too fails to win your approval, perhaps you will credit Frederick's own words. It was in the year 1768 that Frederick II. in his will impressed upon his successor that the Prussian soldiers must fear their officers more than death, because only fear of their own officers could force Prussian soldiers to look great dangers in the face. In the face of this royal testimony, it is not surprising that a year earlier James Harris, afterwards Lord Malmesbury, a man who exercised a profound and beneficent influence on the political history of England, should write in his Berlin diary: 'There is no surer way for an officer to win his favour than, when he has ordered a punishment to be inflicted on a soldier, to exceed his commission, and instead of giving four hundred lashes, as he was told, to give five hundred. The most ferocious and brutal are sure of promotion with him.'

"Moreover Gustav Freytag, in his *Pictures from the German Past*, reproduces the evidence of an eye-witness, a Swiss pressed into the Prussian service."

Manfred read out: "'Soon every week we heard fresh and

alarming stories of deserters, who, no matter how cunningly they disguised themselves as sailors, artisans or women, or hid themselves in casks and barrels or otherwise, were none the less captured. Then we had to witness how they were made to run the gauntlet eight times backwards and forwards through a long file of two hundred men, until they sank down breathless; and the next day, with the clothes hanging in rags from their lacerated backs, were compelled to go through it all over again, and were once more thrashed, till the strips of bleeding flesh hung down over their trousers. Then my fellow-countryman and, I, trembling and deathly pale, exchanged glances and whispered: "The accursed barbarians!" What took place close by on the drilling-ground wrung from us similar exclamations. Here too there was no end to the cursing and flogging by brutal officers, or to the moaning of the victims."

"For his non-military slaves Frederick, contrary to the doctrines of the age of enlightenment, maintained the equally barbarous method of execution by breaking on the wheel. It is true that he wrote of this very humanely: 'The true purpose of this is not so much that the delinquent should be tortured as that he should furnish a terrible example by which to deter others' (161).

"After such an abolition of torture by Frederick the Great, does it not seem very natural that Frederick should say of his troops: 'The surprising thing to me is that I should be in safety among these people. Every one of them is my inveterate enemy, and yet military discipline keeps them in check.' This discipline was so severe that the soldiers never found time to ask, as Archduke Charles is declared by Lisclotte of the Pfalz to have asked: 'Are we not arrant blockheads to go to our deaths for the sake of these foolish kings?'; and yet Archduke Charles, when the Emperor involved him in the War of the Spanish Succession, was not ordinary cannon fodder, like most of the other blockheads who hacked each other to pieces in this or subsequent wars; on the contrary, the Emperor proposed to make him King of Spain, so that the War was in some sense waged on his behalf."

Pastor Dietrich: "You judge the social conditions of the

eighteenth century with the all too sensitive eyes of a modern man. Certainly there took place in the Prussian barrack-yards of that day all sorts of things which we can no longer approve to-day, but such things are explained by the mentality of the age; they were international, and ought not to be judged sentimentally by modern standards."

Manfred: "Were they international? Why then did Field-Marshal Hermann von Boyen ask, when he and Gneisenau were pleading for the 'freedom of the back,' that is to say, for the abolition of flogging in the Prussian army: 'Is Prussia to be the sole nation which, in deplorable contrast with its neighbours, proves incapable of treating its soldiers with more justice and humanity?' Was the Field-Marshal too sensitive, too dainty, too sentimental, or was the gruesome Frederician flogging system really something specifically Prussian? Could it, after the age of Frederick II., be completely eradicated from the Prussian barrack-yards? Why did the Report of the Royal Prussian Reorganisation Commission in 1806 complain that 'the officers are in respect of culture so far behind all other classes'? Am I so sensitive? Bismarck as a young man expressed his aversion to 'amusing himself with the rod for training recruits.' It was only a short time ago, when I was talking to Hans Delbrück, that I realised that this was not intended metaphorically. This famous Prussian professor assured me that already in the eighteenth century the French soldiers no longer submitted to flogging, and that 'there was no flogging and no running the gauntlet in the Napoleonic army.' I expressed my regret that the soldiers of Frederick II. and, following Frederick's example, all Germans up to the time of their redemption by Napoleon and Baron vom Stein, were treated so much less humanely. But Hans Delbrück remarked: 'Flogging is not so bad; I myself have thrashed recruits during the time of my military service.' In his essay 'On the difference between the strategy of Frederick and Napoleon,' however, Delbrück makes far-reaching admissions."

Manfred had taken up Delbrück's work, and read out: "After Frederick had been dissatisfied with his infantry at the Battle of Zorndorf, he wrote to Prince Henry: "Teach your

infantry to respect the stick." Delbrück continues: "With this system it was almost a matter of indifference whether a battalion consisted of sons of Brandenburg and Pomeranian peasants or of homeless vagabonds or of captured Austrians and Saxons. In three ranks, shoulder to shoulder, at a uniform pace, with the platoon commanders to right and left and officers behind, the advance was made, the volley fired at command, and the advance pushed on through the fire of the enemy until the command to 'Halt' once more rang out. There is no hesitation, no deviation and no goodwill . . ." "The inevitable result of Prussian discipline was that fear was held to be the one and only motive for the military exploits of the common man" . . . "If you are marching through a wood, writes the King for the instruction of his generals, cavalry patrols should escort the infantry; at night a chain of sentries should be placed round the camp; the tents of the soldiers should be inspected at night; the men should be led by their officers in rank and file to fetch wood and water—and so on, fourteen different rules, all intended to prevent any opportunity being given for desertion." During a campaign Prussian soldiers were only allowed to satisfy the demands of nature under supervision, in rank and at the word of command. This was the will of their great King."

"Delbrück continues: 'From the mere firing machine, into which, to express it harshly, the linear tactics had transformed the soldier, he became after the revolution, a spontaneous fighting individual. This it was that made it possible to introduce sharpshooting tactics.'

"As it happens, my bookseller has sent me the book by Captain von Witzleben published in the year 1851: 'From the old order books of the Berlin Garrison in the time of Frederick the Great,' a book which has excited my interest and astonishment. Captain von Witzleben, at any rate, is certainly not sensitive; on the contrary, the events of 1848 seem to have made him regret the abolition of 'that simple but excellent instrument of discipline,' as he calls the Prussian stick. Captain von Witzleben's book consists in the main of extracts from the order books of a Berlin grenadier regiment which happened to come

into his hands. These order books date from the years 1750-54 and 1780-83. The editor's comments upon his extracts bear witness both to his fervent admiration and to his expert knowledge."

As none of those present were familiar with von Witzleben's book, Manfred at our request gave us the following account of it.

Manfred: "Captain von Witzleben instructs an admiring posterity regarding the nature of those instruments of torture, which Frederick the Great did not abolish, but rather aggravated in order to whet the courage of his soldiers. Von Witzleben enumerates stick, rod, putting in chains and running the gauntlet, and declares: 'The non-commissioned officers were doughty in wielding the stick, that simple but excellent instrument of discipline, and they usually employed it to punish minor offences on duty; consequently they were furnished with a stick both on duty and off duty. While, however, they maintained discipline among the common soldiers with a strong arm they were themselves frequently compelled to bow their backs beneath the rod of the adjutant, and they shared this fate with the lance-corporals, who occupied very much the same rank as our present-day ensigns.

" 'In addition to the stick and the rod, a punishment dreaded by non-commissioned officers and common soldiers alike, was the putting in chains, for this meant that the right arm and the left foot or the left arm and the right foot, or even both, were chained so close together as to necessitate a far from enviable posture, and even at the present day the soldier uses the expression 'lying crooked' to describe a hopeless financial situation.

" 'The most severe physical punishment, however, was running the gauntlet. Common soldiers only received this punishment for desertion, drunkenness and insubordination, etc. The culprit was obliged to pass, with bared back, through a double line of his comrades, each of whom was provided with a rod, with which he struck him as he passed. This punishment was accompanied, in order to drown the anguished cries of the victim, by the sound of pipe and drum, for the melody

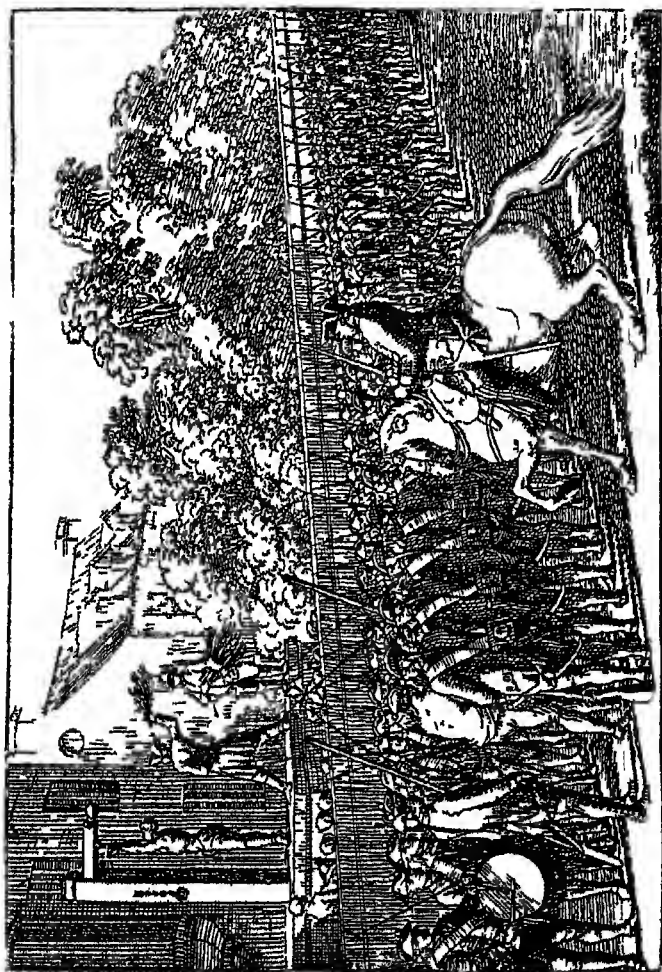
of which the soldiers composed a sing-song to the following effect :

Wherefore did you run away !  
Therefore must you run the gauntlet  
Therefore you are here.

“The punishment was regulated by increasing or decreasing the number of men employed and the number of times the culprit had to pass between their ranks. At each side of the double line of men there were corporals armed with stout canes to see that the men did not, out of sympathy with the offence or pity for the offender, diminish the severity of the punishment by dealing too gentle blows.” Flogging they were flogged !

“The previous owner of my second-hand copy of Witzleben’s book, one Herr von Kleist, seems to have been very well up in this question. He has written here in the margin with a fine pen the following long comment :

“Three hundred soldiers, seldom less, stood opposite one another in two rows, and formed a passage six to seven feet wide. All were furnished with hazel rods a yard long and a half to three-quarters of an inch thick. Through the alley thus formed the condemned man had to proceed quite slowly, with his body bared, three to six times, or sometimes even more ; his hands were tied across his breast, and a non-commissioned officer, who conducted him, saw that he did not proceed too rapidly. From each of the soldiers drawn up in line to his right and left, he received a stout blow ; thus, if he passed through six times, which was the ordinary number, he received  $6 \times 300 = 1800$  blows on his naked body. The latter was of course terribly lacerated. If he was finally so exhausted by loss of blood that he could not proceed further, the remainder of the blows to which he had been sentenced were given to him lying down, the soldiers being made to march by him in file. Often the King personally ordered that the culprit should run through 300 men twelve or twenty-four times instead of six times, with the stipulation that, if the man were on the point of death, the remainder of the punishment should be postponed until he had somewhat recovered. This interruption was to be repeated as many times



RUNNING THE GAUNTLET

*From a painting by C. J. Atter*





as might be necessary, in order that no one might die before he had received his full punishment. Thus the sufferings of many of the condemned men lasted for years.'

"Preuss (162) tells the story of the grenadier, Marufski, whom Frederick II. had pressed into his service, and who 'in an access of melancholy' cut two fingers off his right hand in order that he might be released. 'Frederick the Great graciously confirmed the following sentence': 'The rascal is to run the gauntlet twenty-four times, and if after that he is still alive, he is to be sentenced to two years' labour in a fortress.' As the rascal had 'not yet completely recovered,' and as a number of the clergy as well as lay persons interceded for him, and his eighty-year old father undertook to furnish another fine fellow of the same height to the company,' the regimental commander asked 'whether the King would graciously consent to remit the prescribed punishment.' To this enquiry the King replied in French: 'What weakness! The laws must be executed. There must be no softness.'

"It is also clear from the orders that that most frightful of Frederician tortures, the running the gauntlet, was by no means employed only against deserters (though this would have sufficed to make it a daily phenomenon), but that it was also inflicted for minor or even trivial offences. Most frequently this barbarous torture was employed to punish the crime of drunkenness. Any one who considers it possible that such a bestial army system as that of Frederick was not calculated to promote a longing for drink, may read here in Captain von Witzleben's book: 'At almost every drill or parade of the guard, it was prescribed in the order "that the fellows must not come intoxicated," and "if, however, one of them is found to be drunk, he must immediately run the gauntlet, and therefore the provost should always take rods with him."' Captain von Witzleben adds: 'That the punishment was not merely threatened, but was also frequently inflicted, is proved by a number of orders. Not only for drunkenness, moreover, but also for minor offences on guard, disorderly attire, and laziness at drill, the punishment of running the gauntlet was threatened and inflicted.'"

Since Frederick the Great so frequently threatened suicide in his youth and in his adult years, the following words of the Prussian nobleman, Captain von Witzleben, and the order to which they relate are interesting. Von Witzleben writes : "While these and many other orders bear witness to the strict discipline enforced in the service, the following order, dated January 31, 1781, reveals a stern but fatherly care for the physical welfare of the individual man : 'To-morrow sentence on the grenadier, Muska, is to be executed, because he tried to cut his throat. He is to run the gauntlet sixteen times in two days,' which offered reasonable prospects (so Captain von Witzleben continues) that this man who was tired of life would rid himself of its burden in a less sinful fashion.' Captain von Witzleben is undoubtedly right : The grenadier, Muska, was tortured to death. Why ? Because he had emulated his king, and had contemplated freeing himself from the shame of Prussian life. Certainly the grenadier, Muska, was treated with fatherly care, as Captain von Witzleben proudly boasts. In fact, if he had not been tortured to death, he would have met the fate described in the royal order of January 21, 1754 : 'If the soldiers run away, they are to have an "S" burnt into their hands ; it is to be burnt deep into the flesh, and then they are to be kept in confinement for a few days, so that they cannot do anything to get rid of it'."

Pastor Dietrich : "Do you really think that other military nations did not have recourse to flogging in those days ?"

Manfred gave one of his enigmatic laughs, and replied : "Truly it seems as if it were only the Cossacks who had more sense of honour than the Prussians. At any rate, von Archenholtz writes of the Cossacks : 'These people are distinguished for their soldierly sense of honour ; no Cossack will consent to be chastised with a stick, but whipping is submitted to as an honourable punishment'."

Pastor Dietrich failed to perceive the mockery behind Manfred's words, and said : "You do admit then that other nations beside the Prussian submitted to flogging ?"

Manfred : "No, not quite. Listen to what von Archenholtz writes concerning the despised French at Rossbach : 'In

no army did such gaiety prevail. For lack of other spectacles, they used to amuse themselves by stripping harlots to the waist and making them run the gauntlet ; this was the more surprising since the French soldiers themselves never underwent corporal punishment in this or any other form.' To the honest von Archenholtz it seemed 'surprising' that the Prussian running the gauntlet should be ridiculed in the French camp.'"

Pastor Dietrich found this subject embarrassing, and he changed it by asking : " But was there no thrashing among the Austrians ? "

Manfred : " In 1778-79 the Prussian soldiers found themselves so much better off in the Austrian army than with their great King, that the latter tried to prevent them from swarming over to the ranks of the enemy by the following letter :

" ' My dear General von Tauentzien. I herewith instruct you to have the officers circulate among the regiments a rumour that according to the Austrian deserters not a day passes but the Austrians flog to death some ten to twelve men, whom they scarcely trouble to bury. Further, that of the deserters from our ranks, they recognised a large number whom they had recruited in Frankfurt-am-Main, and hanged them for not serving with their troops. You must arrange for the officers to talk of these things, so that the men overhear and are thereby frightened out of deserting. I am, etc. From the Camp at Lauterwasser, September 1st, 1778."

" You see how artful Frederick was, what a *trompeur et demi* ! " Hereupon Manfred suddenly turned to Pastor Dietrich, and asked : " What is your opinion, Sir, concerning the affair of your colleague, Pastor Faulhaber ? "

As Pastor Dietrich did not remember this affair, Manfred read out some passages from Preuss (163), from which it appeared that this cleric was accused by a recaptured deserter of having said in confession, in answer to an enquiry, that desertion was indeed a great sin, but that God might forgive it in a repentant sinner. Thereupon Frederick issued a royal order in French, which began : ' My dear Lieutenant-Colonel, you must hang Pastor Faulhaber, without allowing him to receive the sacrament.' The cleric was thereupon not merely hanged on the

gallows employed for spies, but hanged next to a spy who had already been suspended there for six months."

Pastor Dietrich replied that none the less Frederick the Great had on the whole looked after his soldiers better than any one. Manfred replied: "Perhaps you are right. Listen, for instance, to the following examples of Frederick's consideration for his soldiers, as recorded in the old order books. Here, for example, is one dated May 2nd, 1780: 'At to-morrow's review the men must be properly powdered, their ears washed quite clean and their pigtailed not smothered in powder. Those who have beards must dress them decently, and let none of them be drunk or have a brandy bottle about him. If in future a non-commissioned officer is carrying a stick which is not his own, he is at once to have thirty strokes.'

"Or here on January 10th, 1781: 'The plaits are not to be fastened too high or too low. The clasps are to be under the shoulder-knot, so that they cannot be seen. Better attention is to be paid to the hairdressing, and each man is to have three good plaits, unless he has too little hair, in which case he is to have two'."

Pastor Dietrich protested: "You should not object to these ancient customs. At the time of the Seven Years' War conditions were altogether different."

Manfred: "Very well, then listen to this order, dated July 20th, 1751, that is to say, shortly before the Seven Years' War: 'The leather straps are to be well pipeclayed, and the hair powdered very white; they must also bring powder with them, so that they may powder themselves afresh for Potsdam.'"

"Here Captain von Witzleben remarks: 'The enormous quantity of powder consumed is clear from the order of July 25th, 1753, in which it was ordered, in connection with a review at Spandau, that the companies should take with them into camp a hundredweight of powder and chalk'."

When Pastor Dietrich declared himself dissatisfied with this evidence, Manfred replied to him: "Aha! I see that all this is not warlike enough for you. You want something from the time of the Seven Years' War. Very well. Frederick's enthusiastic admirer, Captain J. W. von Archenholtz, gives us as

an eye-witness the following description of the great King's fatherly solicitude for his soldiers.

Archenholtz is writing of the winter of 1759-1760: "Now there followed a remarkable winter campaign, which swept off a large number of men. . . . Owing to the frightful cold, wood had to be collected all day long. . . . The soldier spared neither stable nor barn nor house. The Spanish did not seek more eagerly for gold in newly discovered America than did the Prussians for wood. The canvas of the tents was frozen as hard as a board. . . . Every day the ill-clad soldiers were frozen to the bone. In the camp there were no stoves; the outposts had only wood-fires at best, and frequently even these were lacking; for the officers wooden huts were built. The common soldiers, in order to keep the blood from freezing in their torpid limbs, ran round and round the camp like madmen, or else neglected their cooking and crept into their tents where they lay one on top of the other, in order at least to warm some portions of their bodies against the bodies of their comrades . . . or . . . the soldier stretched himself full length and roasted his body in the ashes. Even though the fire almost consumed their lightly clad bodies in front, their backs were frozen with the cold. . . . Provisions were by no means plentiful, and the soldier was restricted to his regimental bread, with which he always made water soup. . . . Under such circumstances both attack and defence were equally impossible, and a regiment never returned from this camp to its wretched winter-quarters without an increased number of sick men. They were buried in heaps. . . . The Austrians were forced by this example to do the same. Thus both armies exhibited to the world a state of things never before recorded in the history of northern warfare. . . . These wretched cantonment quarters were the grave of several thousands of Maria Theresa's soldiers. Pestilences spread among them, so that in January 4000 men died in sixteen days. . . . As it is an insult to history to assume that every error or caprice on the part of a great man is the fruit of carefully laid plans and wise motives, one may venture to question the utility of this icebound camp, the maintenance of which was probably due to whim rather than design, since nothing what-

ever was or could be gained by it, for in this camp every human faculty was benumbed. . . . This single winter campaign cost the King more men than two big battles would have done. The loss was, however, not very conspicuous, because the gaps were constantly filled by fresh men. . . . This circumstance excited much comment in Vienna'."

Manfred continued :

"There we have, in addition to Frederick's brutal flogging system, another important secret of his military successes : the unscrupulous exercise of power, by which he continually secured fresh slaves for his army. This hitherto unequalled capacity to bring up continual fresh supplies of humanity to the shambles is referred to by the French Military Attaché, Montazet, in a letter to the Minister of War, Belle-Isle, after Frederick's defeat at Hochkirch : 'Not that I judge the King of Prussia to be a much better general than the others. It is very easy to criticise him, but in fact he has an army which allows him to make mistakes, because it is always ready to make good his errors.'

"This very remarkable superiority was only acquired by Frederick II. after very remarkable experiences. Archenholtz writes : 'Frederick's insistence that the whole Saxon army should join the ranks of the conqueror *en masse* is without a parallel in the world's history. . . . No account was taken of the Saxons' hereditary love of their fatherland and their prince. None the less this sentiment soon made itself manifest to Frederick's amazement. . . . Most of them simply marched off, in full military rig-out, after they had driven away or shot their commanders . . . in many engagements whole companies of Saxons crossed over to the Austrians on the field of battle, and immediately directed their weapons against the Prussians.' Is it not as though one were reading some inspiring account of the revolt against Napoleonic oppression ?

"Archenholtz continues : 'Owing to the number of desertions, the decline of Frederick's military strength was so great that it could not be made good merely by the enlisting of Saxons and of his own subjects. Hence there arose a recruiting system, the nature and extent of which is without parallel in the history of the globe. Captured enemy soldiers were com-

pelled to serve in the Prussian ranks. They were not asked whether they wanted to serve. They were dragged to the Prussian standards, and forced to swear allegiance and so to fight against their fellow-countrymen. The whole German Empire was swarming with secret Prussian recruiting officers. The bulk of these were not really officers, but hired adventurers, who had recourse to every conceivable artifice, in order to get hold of men. The Prussian Colonel Colignon was their commander, and he instructed them by his example. He travelled about in all kinds of disguises . . . he not merely promised verbally, but gave official documents, in which he appointed young coxcombs lieutenants and captains of the Prussian Army. The glory of Prussian arms was so great and so associated with the idea of rich booty that Colignon's commission-factory was kept incessantly occupied. The would-be officers hastened with their commissions to Magdeburg, where they were received as common recruits and forcibly enrolled in the regiments. Here resistance was of no avail; the stick was used until it had reduced them to complete subjection. By this and other means Colignon and his gang secured for the King in the course of the war 60,000 new recruits.'

"But Frederick the Great had still simpler and more effective means of filling up the ranks of human victims to be led to the slaughter. Archenholtz gives the following example among others: 'Of all the provinces over which the Prussians hoisted their standards, none was so brutally treated as the Duchy of Mecklenburg, from the towns and villages of which the population departed in hundreds. . . . Among other things, this province was forced in the seven years of devastation to supply, in addition to a large quantity of fodder and cattle, 16,000 new recruits and a contribution of forty-two million taler. All this was enforced with brutal severity. The leading citizens were kept in prison on a diet of bread and water. In Güstrow the parish-church served as prison for the new soldiers who had been collected, and they were kept there for many weeks before they were taken away to the army. . . . What could not be carried off was destroyed; even the beds of the poor inhabitants were slit up, and the feathers scattered to the winds.'



"Do not forget that what I have just read to you is not taken from an indictment against the tyrant, Frederick II., but from a eulogy of the 'moral greatness of the Prussian nation and of the sublime virtues of a very remarkable ruler,' as Archenholtz writes in the introduction to his book."

Pastor Dietrich: "You ought not to take those times of frightful distress, with its inevitable consequences for the enemy's country, as a demonstration of the nature and activities of Frederick the Great."

Manfred: "Aha! you would like to go back to less gruesome times. Let me propose the year 1778. At that time the chastened Frederick II. had for fifteen years been preparing himself for his new war against the German Emperor, and had, if one is to believe his eulogists, won the hearts of his subjects by his faithful and pacific labours. How did he summon them to his standards at that time?"

Manfred took up the fourth volume of Preuss's collection of documents, and read out the following from Frederick's letter of February 4th, 1778, to General von Tauentzien: "I beg to inform you that . . . for the purpose of completing the regiments . . . a different method must be adopted; the men can be brought in on the pretext that they are to work at the fortress at Brieg, and . . . when they have arrived, instead of working at the fortress they will be drilled. This method must be employed in order to collect the men." This was the method employed by the cunning old Fritz, and exactly the same method was once employed in Africa for the slave-hunts, and almost the same method is still employed in the South Sea Islands, when it is desired to press natives into service for which they have no inclination. The old Frisian historian, Wiarda, gives in his *East Frisian History* (164), an account of the way in which Frederick captured soldiers in his own country, which is even more reminiscent of the capture of negroes in the good old days. When he acquired East Frisia, Frederick II. expressly promised military exemption. In 1778 the King had a rumour circulated that he intended to start all kinds of work at Emden. Six hundred men offered their services. They were suddenly surrounded by armed men, placed on board ship and carried off.

When this incident became known, every young East Frisian followed the example of Nettelbeck and fled across the frontier. Agriculture and trade were abandoned. The fugitives only began to drift back gradually after the Prussian troops had departed."

"Baron von der Goltz, in his *Rossbach and Jena*, specially praises Berenhorst as one of the best critics of the Frederician army and its tactics: "Berenhorst's *Reflections on Military Science* was an epoch-making work. . . . Never has a serious satirist made more instructive comments. . . . Berenhorst and Bulow are the prophets of the coming age." This Berenhorst wrote: "The King (Frederick II.) neglected that second part of culture, which alone infuses or can infuse life into tactics. I am unable to determine whether there were obstacles in his way, or whether royal negligence and disdain were responsible, but in any case it is abundantly evident that there was no healthy cultivation of the character and intelligence, or of any spiritual values; for we cannot count dramatic spectacles and fine feathers as such. Rather did he (Frederick II.) undermine by repugnant or alien manners a national quality, whose development his century demanded that he should encourage. 'Is it possible to pass a more devastating judgment on a monarch, whom we are expected to admire as 'great'? And is not everything that Berenhorst, the 'prophet of the coming age,' says of Frederick's relation to the army, exactly applicable to Frederick's relation to German culture?'"

Pastor Dietrich: "There you are letting yourself be misled by the lamentations which were sounded after the battle of Jena, but which could not in any way detract from the greatness of our Frederick."

Manfred: "But why? Berenhorst was the son of old Dessauer; in the Seven Years' War he was adjutant to his great King, and the second edition of his *Reflections on Military Science* appeared as early as 1798.

"But I can see that anything approaching a condemnation uttered in time of war, no matter whether it be in 1760, 1778 or 1806, is painful to you. So let me revert to Frederick in time of absolute peace.

"At that time Frederick appears to have felt special solicitude for the beards of his beloved soldiers. In 1780 we read in the order-books published by Captain von Witzleben: 'The companies are to make absolutely sure that no wax is used for the beards, which are merely to be dressed; if this is not attended to, the commander of the company is to be arrested.'

"From this last observation it is evident moreover that it was not only the common soldiers who were severely taken to task; and it is difficult to conceive how anything approaching a spirit of chivalry could survive in officers who were employed in this way.

"Then I recall two interesting reports, which Professor Hans Delbrück included in his *History of Military Science* (165), because they seemed to him worthy of credence. After Frederick the Great had fled from the field of Mollwitz, when the issue of the battle was still in the balance, and after his army had won the victory behind his back, he was naturally very indignant with his officers, 'especially those in the cavalry,' and he made this clear to them. 'On this occasion,' writes Delbrück, 'the young King behaved with such severity that over 400 officers are said to have applied for their discharge.' The less sensitive officers, who put up with this new treatment and remained, seem to have been those of the infantry. At any rate Delbrück writes, in his description of the low level of culture in the Frederician officers' corps: 'No wonder that Berenhorst could write: When in 1741 an order contained some reference to columns, these gentlemen began to say to one another: "And what may columns be? Well, well, I shall follow my leader, and wherever he marches, I shall march too." As late as the second half of the nineteenth century our army still contained staff-officers and generals of low-German origin, who never succeeded in completely mastering their native and accusative. Just like their great King!' The explanation of this, at least as regards Frederick II. and his age, is given by Delbrück as follows: 'Again and again Frederick reverts in his writings to the fact that plebeians are not suitable for officers. . . . Frederick William I. used to send mounted police to fetch away the boys from the aristocratic country houses, to the despair of

their parents, and place them in the cadet corps. . . . Frederick II. employed the same method in Silesia. . . . The education received in the cadet corps was hardly above that of an elementary school, and men of genuinely higher education were very rare in the Prussian officers' corps. . . . Frederick himself sought his associates among Frenchmen.' He did this to the day of his death, although at the ministerial review of 1770 he remarked : ' It is a source of special satisfaction to me that my nobility are beginning to be more cultured, more polished and more serviceable.' After 1779 he used to inquire ' whether the officer is a drunkard, whether he has a good brain, or whether he is a blockhead ? ' ' ' (166).

Pastor Dietrich : " There you have it. Frederick in fact did all he could to improve the education of his nobility. He himself said : ' In my states a lieutenant counts for more than a chamberlain.' A lieutenant was *ex officio* admissible at Court."

Manfred turned over the leaves of his " Old Order-books," and replied : " You are again quite right. Here I have the order of January 17th, 1781 : ' To-morrow evening there is to be a ball at the Queen's. The officers are to come in uniform. The General is to give orders for the last time that the officers are to dress themselves with the most absolute correctness ; otherwise they will be punished there and then as an example.' And on January 22nd, 1782 we read : ' To-morrow there is to be a ball at the French ambassador's ; the regiment is to supply for the guard at this ball one non-commissioned officer and five common soldiers, who must be Frenchmen. The officers who go there are to behave themselves properly, and no soldier is to be seen as a spectator ' ."

Manfred repeated laughingly : " ' Who must be Frenchmen ' and ' punished there and then as an example.' That is sufficiently expressive. All that is wanting is that he should have these aristocratic lieutenants—Prussians of course, not Frenchmen—soundly thrashed in the presence of the Queen and for her diversion, as is said to be done in certain negro states. The Prussian officers were also admitted to the royal theatre. Here I read an order of November 26th, 1752 : ' The bookseller,

Hauden, will supply a printed memorandum, describing how the officers are to behave themselves at the comedy.' Or on December 22nd, 1754: 'The officers are to be told that they must sit in the opera house in the places allotted to them and not cause any disorder there or in any other place; otherwise His Majesty the King will have them arrested.' Or on January 2nd, 1781: 'To-day there is to be a masked ball; the officers are to behave themselves properly there.' And on October 31st, 1781: 'The officers are not to hiss during the comedy; otherwise they may expect a heavy sentence of imprisonment.'

"The Frederician spirit seems to have penetrated to every rank of society. The meanest soldiers felt a craving to ill-treat the civilian, as is evident from the order-books. The most gruesome of these orders is perhaps the following, addressed to the grenadiers engaged in trade: 'The soldiers who have spinning-works are not to treat the people as slaves and to chain them up at night'."

Manfred continued: "I cannot share the admiration felt for Frederician discipline and its consequences. To say that this bestiality is to be explained by the normal historical backwardness of Prussia or by the general conditions of that age and not by the unique and unparalleled barbarism of the Prussian kings seems to me a too palpable glossing of the fact that these Prussian abominations were already in the life-time of Frederick II. branded as barbarism, and this not only by the Swiss and the Englishman to whom I have already referred, but also by French military observers, even by Germans, yes, even by Prussians. Why did Gottsched and Nettelbeck and a host of other Prussians take flight before the Prussian recruiting officers? Why did Winckelmann describe Frederick II. as the 'scourge of the nations'? Why was Goethe so profoundly indignant at the arrival of the Prussian recruiting officers? Why did Lessing call Prussia that 'most slavish country'? No, what is barbarism to-day was also barbarism in the eighteenth century. Only one thing is puzzling: How did it happen that Kant was able to endure life in Prussia?"

Pastor Dietrich: "You fail to appreciate the 'categorical imperative,' which dominated this very great philosopher!"

Manfred : " Your interpretation of the categorical imperative is quite convincing ; it seems in fact to have been the only means by which life in Prussia could be endured by a man of culture. Incidentally I call to mind that Kant's home was in Königsberg, at a safe distance from Berlin and the malice of Frederick. Kant seems to have possessed the faculty of living as though in a non-Frederician world. Even at the present day one finds in East Prussia a certain nobility and courtesy, which is much more reminiscent of the Germans of the Baltic provinces than of the Berliners. In his testament of 1768 Frederick categorically describes the inhabitants of the Königsberg district, on account of their ' soft and effeminate education,' as a ' pack of idlers,' and reproaches the East Prussian nobles with having proved themselves in the war ' more Russian than Prussian '."

In the further course of the conversation Manfred said, half in jest : " When you spoke just now of the gratitude owing by the fatherland to the meanest soldier, who dared to sacrifice his life in the much-admired conflicts of Frederick II., you failed to make it clear whether you propose to restrict this gratitude to those who fell for Prussia, or whether the brave men who staked their lives for the German Emperor and the German Empire—that is to say, against Frederick II.—also merit the gratitude of the German people. Or do you really consider it to have been the duty of every German to revolt against the German Emperor ? "

Pastor Dietrich : " To that taunting question I can, I fancy, supply a very pertinent answer. Let me answer you in the words of the great Prussian historian, Dietrich Schäfer, whose *History of the Modern World* I see you have on your shelf. On page 31 of the first volume he writes"—Pastor Dietrich, who had taken up the book with an air of some solemnity, read out : " ' The Hubertusburg Peace only confirmed what had already been decided at Dresden eighteen years earlier. Not a village changed hands. Never was a conflict waged more fiercely over nothing. It was the first, yet completely fruitless attempt to arrive at a final decision between the two powers, upon whose fate in the days of Frederick the future of Germany depended ;

and it was necessary that one of the two should achieve a complete victory, if German unity and a sound and vigorous German Empire were ever to be restored. History will always regard the fact that the result of this attempt was not favourable to Austria as an achievement, for which the blood of the fallen was not shed in vain'." Pastor Dietrich concluded :

"This is my answer to you : Every man who did his duty, no matter whether he shed his blood for or against Prussia, deserves the gratitude of his country."

Manfred : "' No matter whether for or against ' ! You are rather reckless with the ' blood of the fallen.' I personally am convinced that the victory of Maria Theresa and of Joseph II. would have served the great cause of Germany and therewith of humanity very much better than the victory of Frederick II., Frederick William II. and Prussia's little-Germany aspirations. By the overthrow of Vienna, Germany lost her only hope of an intellectual capital in the sense of Paris and London. If a great capital is to be developed from the barracks of Berlin, it will only be by dint of such spiritual endeavours as are beyond the powers of comprehension of Frederick's admirers.

"I quite understand that the fatherland must be defended ; this seems to me beyond question. But there is one question that one is constantly impelled to ask when investigating European and above all German history : What is meant in Europe by fatherland ? What, for instance, is the German fatherland ? What at the present day is the fatherland of a man, who is striving for an education such as Goethe promised—perhaps it was his greatest legacy ? And what in fact is the obligation towards this fatherland ? I am inevitably reminded of Goethe's words : ' There is a stage at which national hate completely disappears and at which men stand in a certain sense above nationality and sympathise with the happiness or affliction of a neighbouring people as though it were their own. My nature was attuned to this stage of culture, and I had been entrenched in it long before I reached my sixtieth year '."

Pastor Dietrich : "Unfortunately even at the present day that is all Utopian sentimentality, which is very natural in a

cultured German, but is not appreciated by his malicious neighbours. Perhaps, however, it is impossible for an American to do justice to the problems of European nationalities."

Manfred: "My dear Pastor, have you forgotten that amusing little incident some twenty years ago, when you had to say something similar to me? We were school-friends, and Th... V..., whose father is said to have been tutor to the Empress, told us with pride that this highest lady in Germany ordered her clothes from Paris. I ventured to question this statement and to call it bounce, and I said: 'That is done only by the mistresses of those self-made industrialists from the Rhine or Berlin, who employ the discharged funkeys of the English aristocracy to teach them manners.' Th... V... was annoyed, and insisted that what he said was true, and I answered: 'So much the worse, if it is not yet possible to get decent clothes in Berlin.' At that you would gladly have punched my head, and you said: 'You as an American cannot understand European conditions.' Truly I cannot, and therefore I do not pretend to judge the European cravings for dependence and independence in relation to Paris and London and the resultant 'national' wars. In Central and South America we find many national, frontier, commercial and civil wars. In the 'United' States of North America, which in respect of number and size are scarcely inferior to the 'divided' states of Europe, we had as late as the '60s a War of Secession, which seems to be only distinguishable from the Prussian civil wars, the Prussian 'scission,' as Arndt called it, by the fact that in the United States the Secessionists represented the better cause, but that they were none the less defeated—to put the negro on a level with the white man seems to me a monstrosity—and yet in spite of this the United States are exceedingly prosperous; whereas in Germany the shortsighted Prussian cravings for secession won the day, and in consequence Germany has been finally excluded from the number of the first-class great powers. None the less, this Prussian secession is extolled as a triumph, and, from the manner in which Bismarck emphasised the 'facilities for anti-German coalitions,' it looks as though there were many wars yet to be waged between a Germany



weakened and diminished by Frederick II. and the other states of Europe."

Pastor Dietrich: "It is really a pity that you, who have such a warm admiration for our Goethe, should be incapable of appreciating our great King. Tell me, what was the origin of your aversion to Frederick the Great?"

Manfred: "From my German mother I learnt very early to feel a profound sympathy with the sufferings of her first fatherland and of Europe. You may take my word for it that, even when I was a boy, my blood boiled when I read about Frederick II. You are possibly not acquainted with our *Federalist*, a book which we value very highly in America. It is a wonderful record of that lofty political wisdom with which Madison and the great Hamilton established the American constitution a hundred-and-twenty-five years ago. There is one passage in which the necessity for an American federation with a strong central authority is emphasised by a reference to Frederick II., who had died a short time before, and who 'was more than once pitted against his imperial sovereign, and commonly proved an overmatch for him.' Another passage runs: 'The history of Germany is a history of wars between the emperor and the princes . . . of the licentiousness of the strong and the oppression of the weak, of foreign intrusions and foreign intrigues . . . of general imbecility, confusion and misery'."

Pastor Dietrich: "There you have the explanation: foreign intrusions and foreign intrigues. It is easy to make the general stupidity responsible, if the confusion to which you justly refer was rendered more and more frightful by foreign invasions. Under these circumstances Frederick the Great took the only justifiable course. . . ." Manfred: "...when he made common cause with the foreign intruders. . . ." Pastor Dietrich: "No, when he wielded the mailed fist both inside and outside his frontiers, and so paved the way to the present greatness of the German Empire. He thereby proved himself one of the most gifted and far-sighted rulers of all time. The decisions which he had to make were often difficult; good and evil, right and wrong were seldom clearly distinguishable. But on every occasion he acted as seemed to him best, and that is the

essence of real politics ; it is easy at a distance of time to find faults and shortcomings. God has not forsaken his Germans. Under a just guidance Germany will continue in the future to triumph over the dangers which menace her."

Manfred : "The 'just guidance' of a thickly inhabited country with a population of sixty-five million calls for a wide dissemination of political education. We in the United States have made desperate, but not very successful, efforts to achieve this political education of our people."

Pastor Dietrich : "Let me reply to you with Heinrich von Treitschke's fine saying : 'A free country under a free king—that is what we Prussians call freedom'."

Manfred : "That is strikingly reminiscent of the words with which the Frenchman, Regnaud, in 1779 concluded his *Mémoires parlementaires* : 'The Frenchman is subject to his King ; the King is subject to the law. 'That is our motto.' Thirteen years later these all too confiding Frenchmen cut off their King's head. As if that could possibly do any good."

Pastor Dietrich : "There is no danger of this happening with us. We are fortunate in having a highly educated and self-sacrificing civil service and a sound conservative nobility."

Manfred : "I have often wondered what the German nobles felt in their hearts, when they sacrificed their lives for and against the German Empress in the Frederician civil wars, and this not—as in the case of many common soldiers—more or less against their will. Numerous 'Conversations in the realm of the dead' (167) were published at that time ; in Hades, so the authors conceived, the Prussian and Austrian officers would be reconciled. After having slaughtered one another with desperate courage, these heroes now engage in friendly discussions of their glorious exploits in the service of their kings. I remember that a Prussian Lieutenant-General von der Schulenburg is represented as justifying himself as follows : 'All that we military servants had to do was to obey the orders of our ruler, and it was no part of our duties to question the justice of these orders.' Certainly in a soldier this is a very estimable point of view. But it was probably the only point of view that existed in Prussia. Was there in Frederician Prussia

a cultured upper class ? Were there, in addition to the blindly obedient 'military servants,' noblemen with a spontaneous sense of responsibility and with a German heart ? ”

Pastor Dietrich : “ But surely you do not imagine that there was no longer a German heart in those days, that the German idea had been destroyed in the ‘Thirty Years’ War and that it was only restored to life by the Hohenzollerns ? ”

Manfred : “ In the territories of the Hohenzollerns it may have been destroyed or flogged to death, but not in the Empire. Think of German aristocrats like von Boineburg and von Schönborn, the friends of Leibniz, think of Leibniz’s own enthusiasm for Germany, think of Just Moser and Klopstock ; in all of them there glows a German fire, quite independently of any efforts of the Hohenzollerns. Think of that family of Saxon scholars, who both thought and spoke good German, and of whom Bismarck was a later offspring—the Menckes. Think of the brilliant pleadings of Thomasius and Wolf on behalf of the German language.”

Pastor Dietrich replied : “ It was not until shortly before the death of Frederick the Great that Wolf became famous.”

Manfred : “ I was not referring to that great German antiquary, Friedrich August Wolf. Nor was I referring to that great German physiologist, Kasper Friedrich Wolff, the founder of the modern theory of evolution, who worked as a physician in the Prussian military hospitals, and to whom Frederick II. so obstinately refused permission to give public lectures, that he finally emigrated to the more appreciative country of the great Catherine. No, I was referring to the great German philosopher, Christian Wolff, who in 1723 was threatened with the gallows unless he should leave Prussia within twenty-eight hours, but whose fame in other countries became so great that Frederick II., who always cringed before foreign opinion, summoned him back to Prussia and tried to share in his glory, though he did not profit by a word of his teaching in regard to the greatness of the German tongue. It seems as though every German at that time had been great and German. Only Frederick II. and his historians refuse to admit any such thing. They believe solely and staunchly in the Germanism and

greatness of their Hohenzollerns, of whom not only Joachim I. in 1519, but also Frederick William in 1679 (it was for that reason that he was called 'the great Elector'), bound themselves by treaty—'*dans un extrême secret*'—to elect as German Emperor the King of France or the Dauphin or the nominee of the French King. The Great Elector received for this an annual allowance of 100,000 francs (168). Frederick the Great punctually fulfilled this agreement at the election of the Emperor Charles VII. But only a Louis XIV. on the German imperial throne could have completely satisfied the Prussian historians and finally emancipated Germany from the 'tyranny of the house of Austria,' against which Frederick II. never ceased to utter warnings."

Pastor Dietrich did not seem to be very conversant with these matters. He insisted that the notion of the German fatherland was only kindled to new life by the Battle of Rossbach.

Manfred: "Do you know that spirited essay, 'The German National Spirit,' penned by Friedrich Karl Moser in the year 1765 against Frederick II. and his puerile theory of a Prussian 'nation' ? This brilliant attack on Frederick was certainly not inspired by Rossbach ; and is it not splendid, glowing German ? It begins :

" 'We are one people, bearing one name and speaking one language, subject to one common overlord, and to one common system of laws prescribing our constitution, rights and duties, pledged to the great common cause of freedom, and united for this high purpose in a national assembly dating back more than a hundred years ; in virtue of our inward might and strength, the first empire in Europe.'

"And Moser's essay contains warnings against Frederick II. and his military slavery, such as the following :

" 'The military spirit of our time has suppressed and devoured every aspiration of this nature ; it is no longer honourable to love one's country ; the one great vocation, the one heroic path to the temple of fame, is to ravage and despoil it. The heroes' creed of our time has the sword for its emblem and very few commandments. . . . From the subjects, who deem

their rulers exalted above all laws, a blind, senseless and servile obedience is demanded and rendered.'

"Is that German or not? And do not Rabener's *Satirical Letters*, written in 1752, already reflect something like scorn for the arguments subsequently invented to excuse Frederick II.'s wanting Germanism. Six years before Rossbach, Rabener wrote: 'It is a matter for eternal regret that not only scholars but even the nobility are now being required to learn German. As though a German needed to learn German!'"

"The conversation now took a fresh turn, owing to the intervention of Professor Karl Stählin, of Strassburg (now of Berlin), the distinguished author of the *History of Alsace-Lorraine*. Stählin referred with legitimate pride to his ancestor, Jacob Stählin, who was somewhat older than Frederick the Great and a pupil of Gottsched, and who never disowned his love for his German fatherland, even at the St. Petersburg Academy, where he was working from 1735-85. Jacob Stählin in 1744 gave vent to his disapproval of Frederick's betrayal of the cause of Germany in a memoir, which leaves nothing to be desired in respect of devotion to the German fatherland. By way of proof, Professor Stählin quoted from Jacob Stählin's memoir of 1744 his vigorous comments on the fact that, in accordance 'with the plans of the wisest German political writers' and the 'desires of all loyal patriots of the fatherland,' the most brilliant opportunity was now afforded by the Austrian penetration into Alsace of 'setting bounds to the arrogance of the French by a patriotic union in the general interests,' and 'of reconquering with the minimum of trouble most of those provinces of which the Empire had been so shamefully deprived, with the aid of the Hungarian forces and by the prosecution of their victories in Alsace.' Jacob Stählin ridiculed Frederick's boast that he would '*rendre la liberté à l'Empire*.'

"Jacob Stählin observed with justice: 'This end would have been achieved most surely, swiftly and completely if the King of Prussia had deigned to win undying glory and the gratitude of Germany and the rest of Europe by reversing the weapon which he had all too lightly seized and, by the side of the Queen of Hungary and her allies, attacking with all his strength

and vigour those arch-enemies of Germany and disturbers of the peace of Europe—the French ; thereby he might, at very little cost, have helped to promote the welfare and tranquillity of all Europe’.”

Manfred, who was not acquainted with this old memoir, seemed delighted at this proof of German love for the fatherland and German mother-wit, as he put it. He continued : “ In truth, those Prussian, anti-German contentions are not only insulting and intolerable to a German, but they are in contradiction with all the facts. Jacob Stählin was by no means alone in his love for the German fatherland ; nor did he write, as Prussian historians will no doubt promptly and emphatically assert, under Russian influence. No, Stählin was only expressing the general feeling in the German Empire. In regard to this same feeling, Frederick II.’s friend, Jordan, complained that he could not understand why the imperial newspapers were always hostile to Prussia. Frederick tried to remedy this by having some leading journalists seized and flogged. Between 1744 and 1746 Frederick II. repeatedly reproached his favourite sister Wilhelmina with her ‘ partiality for this princess, my mortal enemy, the Queen of Hungary, the Austrian, your Empress, whatever you like to call her.’ And again and again Frederick’s letters refer to his resentment at that ‘ Erlangen journalist, who has the effrontery to direct his insults and impertinences against crowned heads ’ ; ‘ you have permitted a rascally Erlangen journalist to pick me to pieces twice a week.’ But the Prussian historians continue to maintain cheerfully that the imperial idea was dead, and was therefore justly trampled under foot by the great Frederick.”

Pastor Dietrich : “ I remember, however, that Friedrich von Schlegel declared that the lofty national sentiment of Klopstock was quite unique in the German world of that time. And Schlegel is not under suspicion either as a Prussian, nor yet on account of lack of national sentiment. For in 1812 he delivered his famous lectures at Vienna, and it was he who in 1809 drafted the Austrian proclamations against Napoleon, which led to Napoleon’s first defeat and to the wars of liberation.”

Manfred was very anxious to see Schlegel’s actual words on

this subject. As his library did not include Schlegel's works, he called up to his study through the old-fashioned speaking-tube, which was still used in the villa instead of a telephone, and ordered the bookshops and libraries of Naples to be searched for a set of Schlegel's works. In the meantime the conversation continued.

Karl Stählin : "Highly as I appreciate the patriotic essay of my ancestor, Jacob Stählin, I must none the less confess that I consider him to have been mistaken both in his imperial patriotism and also in his failure to appreciate Frederick's greatness. It was left to the future—which often shows an apparent wrong to have been a real right—to decide a problem, over which, as we know, the circle which included Julius Stahl and the young Bismarck racked their brains. Our German history is one of the most wonderful and at the same time one of the most painful in the whole world. It is absolutely impossible for a foreigner to understand it. . . ."

Manfred : "Absolutely impossible ! Agreed."

Karl Stählin : "Our fate leads us downwards and upwards by devious paths. . . ."

Manfred : "... not downwards again, let us hope. For this downwards would, from the historical standpoint which you have just adopted, be fatal to the greatness of your Frederick II. 'It was left to the future to decide,' that is to say, to success, in accordance with which the historians are to set their tune ? There you are in opposition to your great King (I admit that in my eyes this constitutes a recommendation !), who excused his attempt, frustrated by Austria, to make Louis XV. the arbiter of Germany, with the words : 'Certainly, France, after the rôle which she played in the Peace of Westphalia, could not have played one greater or more illustrious. But ought we to blame Louis XV., because a number of circumstances were unfavourable to these plans ? Is a philosopher to judge of plans merely by their results ?' (169) As, however, most of what was written by this philosophic king was borrowed from some more distinguished writer, I am not afraid to share the opinion of your Frederick on this occasion. Yes, I believe in historical values which cannot be affected by success or failure.

You yourself instanced a good example. You called imperial patriotism mistaken. To me, on the other hand, it seems obvious that it was above all this 'mistaken' imperial patriotism that animated Baron vom Stein and that prompted the enthusiasm of the wars of liberation. If you doubt this, what do you say to the following vigorous words from Ernst Moritz Arndt's *Spirit of the Age*, written in 1805 and published in 1806 :

“ ‘ And what significance had Frederick's monarchy ? Had it any national significance ? For he liked to be acclaimed the protector and guardian of German freedom, and his contemporaries liked to proclaim to all Europe that Frederick, the King of Prussia, was a German. Empty sounds, with which people have ever deluded themselves. . . . The most arrant and despotic military state, with the most insufferable aristocracy, was described as the achievement of a wise and good king and as the happiest country in Europe. The nature of this monarchy was and is alien to everything that bears the name of German. . . . The King achieved his object of making Austria suspect and weaker ; but of necessity he also achieved something that he had not intended : he crippled Germany for ever. This took place partly by reason of the spirit which he caused to prevail. In every state and nation there is something dark and mysterious which constitutes their innermost life, and by which the whole is held together, as though by invisible bonds ; the ultimate religion, the innermost sense of necessity, incomprehensibly attracting and sustaining. This vestal flame has been sanctified by the superstition of all nations and ages. In Germany this ultimate religion was the name of Emperor and Empire, which, though since the Peace of Westphalia it had been hardly more than a name, had yet more power than the cold laws and schemes directed against it. This religion was destroyed by Frederick, and he was the first to gibe at that mysterious reverence for old names. The Germans laughed foolishly at their fathers' stupid adherence to old superstitions, and Frederick was extolled as a liberator. But the most convincing testimony of all is furnished by the King's government and manner of life, which recall the orgies of the latest revolution. . . . What a



State! And what a ruler! men exclaimed. All wisdom, justice, vigorous action! And yet all merely a machine! Yes, a machine! . . . From the dead only dead things are begotten; with a hollow and ghostly sound the scaffolding of his fame will collapse beneath the odium of posterity. . . . Justice, the immortal queen of king and beggar, tender consideration for the human race and national sentiment, will be sought in vain among the herculean labours of the great king. Everywhere we find the most arrant self-will, the most savage despotism, the most merciless trampling under foot of the tender buds of human feeling. . . . The glory of his name was proclaimed everywhere, and often caused men to forget the slavish conditions of their lives. Has there ever been a time when unhappy mortals have not been duped by sound and shows? Thus did Ernst Moritz Arndt think of Frederick II. and of 'Emperor and Empire' as that mysterious thing 'by which the whole is held together as though by invisible bonds' even in the days of Frederick II. Yes, even in the days of Bismarck! For was it anything but 'mistaken imperial patriotism,' which the young Prussian nobleman imbibed at the non-Prussian university of Göttingen, and which later, contrary to the narrow Prussian aspirations of his class and his king, found vent in valiant exploits on behalf of the foundation of a new empire. The fact that when Bismarck was an old man he still sucked diligently at his non-Prussian student's pipe has a profound significance. From the smoke of that imperialistic student's pipe, and not from the anti-imperial snuff-box of Frederick II., there arose the romantic and belated dream of founding anew the German imperial power which Frederick had destroyed—a dream which, it is to be hoped, will not vanish in smoke."

All this made not the slightest impression on Pastor Dietrich. He still persisted in his view that the Prussian kings had re-awakened the German spirit.

Manfred asked laughingly: "Did not the rulers of Brandenburg, when they confirmed their sovereignty, destroy the German spirit and those who were inspired by it? What did Bismarck say?: 'Frederick William I. sent any one who opposed him to the 'cart' or had him hanged, and Frederick II.

sent the supreme court to Spandau.’ Bismarck might have added: the Great Elector had the recalcitrant Baron von Kalckstein tortured, an illegal proceeding, violating every notion of nobility. Under such conditions a cultured upper class is inconceivable, and a nobility in the true sense of the word, namely, an upper class with the vocation and capacity for leadership, cannot exist. Do you remember the story of Chancellor von Jariges ? ”

Pastor Dietrich : “ I cannot recall it at the moment.”

Manfred : “ The head of the judicial administration, Chancellor von Jariges, who enjoyed Frederick II.’s special confidence, recommended an investigation into the causes of the decline of trade and industry. It was shortly after the King had pushed to such lengths his contempt for the abilities and his mistrust of the honesty of German officials as to subject Prussia to a French bureaucracy. The Prussian historian, Koser, describes this incident as follows: ‘The King ordered the general directorate to furnish an exhaustive report, as recommended by the Chancellor. The Ministers availed themselves of this opportunity to make a violent attack upon the whole new system of administration. The King was indignant at their ‘impertinent report’ and suspected corruption. He declared scornfully that the ministers who had signed the report might be excused on account of their ignorance, but that the ‘malice and corruption’ of the author must be punished by way of example: ‘otherwise I shall never reduce these dogs to subordination.’ The author, Privy Councillor Ursinus . . . was condemned to one year’s imprisonment in a fortress. After that the ministers . . . were more cautious.’

“ The tone in which the great King here rebukes his ministers is the old Prussian tone of his father, though the latter used it for the most part only for instilling Prussian culture into the common people, when, for instance, on August 28, 1716, he wrote from Wusterhausen the following order in respect to the same taxation system: ‘I herewith declare that I regard all those who have spoken, written, and above all voted against excise as rascals, knaves, ignoramuses, clowns, thieves, and good-for-nothings.’

"When such royal influence is exercised for centuries, as was the case in Prussia, the effects must finally make themselves apparent.

"Frederick the Great administered these royal rebukes not merely to insignificant malcontents, but also to ministers who had been selected on account of their high worth and who had been honoured by his confidence. Koser refers to the testament of 1768, in which Frederick the Great complained: 'These men (this is Koser's artful commendation; Frederick's testament speaks of '*cette nation*,' meaning the Prussian nation) move if they are driven, and come to a halt if for one moment the pressure is relaxed. They read little, and have no desire to learn a better way of doing anything. . . .'

"What is one to say to that? To such an ardent admirer of Prussia as Koser, it is all the fruit of the imperishable greatness of his hero, Frederick. He even boasts (unless he is really poking fun) of the tenacity of Prussian abuses; he says: 'Thus the reform of the administration and the reorganising of the official system were effected in the nineteenth century without any abrupt breach with the past, without any sudden departure from the traditions of Frederick William I. and Frederick II.; and even at the present day the Prussian administration preserves numerous traces of that old system, which . . . survives the reforms of 1807 and 1848. This tenacity of the old traditions, this persistence of the spirit ingrained in the army and the bureaucracy, once drove Baron vom Stein to declare of the Brandenburgers that they were only fit for corporals and counting-house clerks.' Thus does Koser write of the persistence of the spirit ingrained in the Prussian '*nation lourde et paresseuse*,' created by the Hohenzollerns. Stein's judgment is severe, but was not Bismarck's judgment frequently still more severe?"

Hegemann: "I often think with sincere pleasure of the splendid men—many of them nobles—with whom I had the honour of becoming acquainted among the officers of the Prussian army. Whatever Frederick II. or Bismarck or vom Stein or other great educators of the German people may in a moment of vexation have said in criticism of their beloved

nation, such reproaches cannot apply to these admirable Prussian officers."

Manfred: "You are undoubtedly right. Even in the days of Frederick II. there must have been among the officers some men who tried to oppose the disastrous Frederician influence. There is a tale, for instance, of an outburst of temper on the part of a cavalry officer. The King had, in a fit of anger, struck the officer's horse on the head with his crutch-stick. I do not know whether it was a pure-breed horse, such as no intelligent groom would venture to treat in this way, but in any case the officer dismounted, drew out his pistol, and shot—not the King, but the horse. Frederick the Great is said to have appreciated this action, and to have paid for a new horse. But horses were cheap at that time; we do not hear of any officer whose sense of honour was as keen on behalf of his men as was this officer's sense of honour on behalf of his horse. It would have come too expensive if every soldier who had been insulted by his King or by junkers addicted to flogging had been proudly shot by his superior officer. Frederick William I. paid up to 1300 pounds sterling for tall Irishmen, and even in the Seven Years' War, when the Prussian traffic in men had swollen to huge dimensions, the price for ordinary recruits never fell below fifteen taler apiece. No wonder then that the thrifty Frederick II. punished an officer who had shot a soldier by transferring him to another regiment."

Pastor Dietrich: "Why do you lay such stress on these unpleasant incidents. That is all long ago forgotten and forgiven. Think of the magnificent officers' corps of the present-day army and of the incomparable Prussian civil service."

Manfred: "Bismarck does not seem to have been quite satisfied with the Prussian development in these spheres. Only call to mind what he said about native-born Prussian diplomats and their 'unwillingness to accept responsibility unless they were covered by absolutely definite instructions, very much as in the military service of 1806 in the old school of the Frederician period. Already in those days we were breeding more perfect material for officers, up to the rank of regimental commanders, than was to be found in any other State, but, above that rank,

the native Prussian blood was no longer fertile in talents as it was in the days of Frederick the Great. Our most successful generals—Blücher, Gneisenau, Moltke, Goeben, were not natives of Prussia, any more than were Stein, Hardenberg, Motz and Grolman in the civil service' . . . 'In Prussia it was cabinet-councillors and honest but narrow-minded adjutant-generals who were responsible for those neglected opportunities, for which the father confessors were responsible in Austria.' What else does Bismarck's comment on the Prussian diplomats imply, if not that the arrogant desire of Frederick II. that his ambassadors should be merely his 'postmen' was to an amazing extent fulfilled? From my earliest youth I have felt an almost reverential admiration for our faithful postmen, especially when they punctually delivered my paternal remittance; none the less the peculiar pride of cultivated Prussians in the postman-like virtues of their higher civil servants has always struck me as rather ridiculous. In fact—speaking in confidence—I have found that there are faithful postmen all over the world, even here in Naples, and that everywhere, be it in Tokyo or in Lisbon, the half-educated proudly base their patriotic aspirations upon their postman-like virtues, that is to say: Prussian or Portuguese 'honesty and faithful attention to duty,' which are of course always quite unique of their kind, because they were created by the national hero, Henry the Seafarer or Frederick the Great, expressly for the country in question, and by Otto the Slothful expressly for the cultured. Those who aspire to postman-like virtues are born subalterns, who suffer from that 'unwillingness to accept responsibility' (and, what is worse, incapacity for it), which Bismarck noted as specially conspicuous in his Prussian contemporaries. Is it possible to say anything more damning? What is the cause of this degeneracy? Does not the explanation suggested by Lord Malmesbury at the beginning of the last decade of Frederician rule sound credible? From the papers left by Malmesbury six stout volumes of letters and diaries have been compiled, in which we are shown the writer and his family, who moved among the most distinguished circles of English society. Malmesbury's remarks concerning the Prussian nobility would be

noteworthy, even if they were not so strikingly confirmed by certain utterances of Frederick II., vom Stein, and Bismarck. Malmesbury wrote in 1776:

“ ‘In general they (Frederick’s subjects) are poor, vain, ignorant and destitute of principle. Had they been rich, his nobility could never have been brought to serve as subaltern officers with zeal and ardour.’ Malmesbury had for years been a spectator of that subaltern zeal described by another eye-witness who won Gustav Freytag’s appreciation: ‘On the drilling-ground there was no end to the curses and blows of junkers with a taste for flogging nor to the wails of the flogged.’ Malmesbury goes on to describe these nobles of Frederick II.: ‘Their ignorance stifles in them every notion of liberty and opposition, and their want of principle makes them ready instruments to execute any orders they may receive, without considering whether they are founded on equity or not. His Prussian Majesty has well known how to take advantage of this character by keeping them at a most awful distance.’ These gentlemen imagined perhaps that, because the great King spoke French and, together with his groom of the chambers, tried to make gold in costly laboratories at Potsdam and Berlin, he must either be a wizard or, as Thomas Mann says, a goblin. Malmesbury continues: ‘They consider a word or a smile from him as a boon; . . . and, although they feel the rod of iron with which they are governed, yet few repine; and none venture to murmur.’ So much for Lord Malmesbury.

“In respect to such people Frederick was right when he wrote in his *Antimachiavel*: ‘The vogue of rebellion and revolution seems at the present day to be quite over.’ And he was almost right when he continued: ‘There is no country save England where the King has the least reason to fear his people; and even in England the King has nothing to fear, unless he himself unchains the tempest.’ Almost right too was that bold euphemist and fumiste, Heinrich von Treitschke, when he found in Frederick’s *Antimachiavel* not merely ‘youthful rhetoric and moral platitudes,’ but the ‘political genius’ of ‘a mature and expert diplomat,’ whose ‘prematurely enlightened judgment’ echoes ‘sharply and sternly’! Voltaire,

less inclined to admiration, cut down this political masterpiece from 135 to 100 pages, and made it almost readable. It is still half as long again as the masterpiece of Machiavelli, whom Frederick covered with abuse in writing before he outdid him in practice.

"In the *Antimachiavel*, admired by Treitschke, Frederick the Great held up for imitation 'the English constitution as a model of wisdom.' Hence it is scarcely possible to doubt that the great Frederick, in accordance with his own recommendations and with a view to his people's highest good, would have felt it his duty to introduce the English constitution into Prussia, if he had not turned to look at his subjects and made a startling discovery. At any rate this is Koser's account of Frederick's extraordinary omission. Koser relates: 'They are Brandenburgers,' exclaimed the King subsequently, 'not Englishmen'!"

Pastor Dietrich: "There you have once more the practical statesman. A perception that a certain form of government is best is in itself no adequate reason for introducing it."

Manfred: "That is just what Reinhold Koser says. Do you know that Bismarck too once racked his brains to discover why the English constitution could not be introduced into Prussia? He finally arrived at the following conclusion: 'We are wholly lacking in that class which controls politics in England—the class of well-to-do and therefore conservative gentlemen, who are independent of material interests, whose whole education is directed towards their becoming English statesmen, and the whole purpose of whose life is to play a part in the public affairs of England; our educated class are, with a few exceptions, so wedded to the materialism of private life, to their home interests, that most of them would find it intolerable to take part for any length of time in parliamentary affairs.'"

"Bismarck's admiration of the idealism of the English aristocracy, or at any rate of its independence of material interests, may sound facetious.

"Was there, however, any justification for Frederick II.'s stern mistrust of his Prussian—as compared with his French—civil servants? He said that ninety-nine out of a hundred of

his War Office clerks were knaves. Was it because he paid them so badly ? Or was it simply the result of his demoralising despotism that culture and the aristocratic virtues, or however else one may describe the qualities of the upper class of society, were at that time impossible in Prussia ? ”

### BISMARCK, WALLENSTEIN AND GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS AS GERMAN NOBLEMEN

Pastor Dietrich : “ Really, I think you exaggerate. Has any social class ever deserved the epithet ‘ noble ’ more than that from which Bismarck sprang and which furnished the splendid originals extolled by Fontane ? ”

Manfred : “ You are right. Even if Fontane spoke somewhat too flatteringly of these gentlemen, because he cleverly extolled in them his own bourgeois ideas—he himself was the original—yet we are still faced with the striking phenomenon of Bismarck. His mother, it is true, belonged to a middle-class and non-Prussian family of scholars and poets ; all the same, we have in him a specimen of true aristocracy.”

Pastor Dietrich : “ Well then, there you have a true Prussian aristocrat, and one who certainly entertained no doubts regarding the legitimacy of those Frederician wars which you call civil wars.”

Manfred : “ Are you so sure ? On the contrary, Bismarck wins my sympathy above all by the fact that—perhaps in his best hours ?—he was proud to feel himself not a Prussian but a German nobleman. How else are you to interpret numerous passages in his *Reflections and Reminiscences* ? ”

Manfred fetched the Reminiscences of the Iron Chancellor, and, after turning over the pages, read out several passages : “ ‘ Prussian particularism too originated as a revolt against the whole German commonwealth, against Emperor and Empire, as a secession from both, supported first on papist, then on French, always on foreign aid, all equally detrimental and dangerous to the whole German Commonwealth.’ And then : ‘ The territorial sovereignty of the individual princes had, in the course of German history, developed to an unnatural extent ; the indi-



vidual dynasties, Prussia not excepted, never had a better historic right than under the Hohenstaufen and Charles V. to partition the German people among them as their private property—and to claim the lion's share of it. The absolute sovereignty of the dynasties, of the knights of the Empire, of the imperial cities and imperial villages, was achieved by revolutionary means at the expense of the nation and its unity. It has always impressed me as an unnatural state of things that peaceable peasants, of like race and bound by ties of marriage . . . should shoot down each other, on the one hand for Guelph and Hapsburg and on the other for Hohenzollern interests.'

"Those are the words of a German nobleman, and they are the words of Bismarck!

"Is it not as though Bismarck, long after Frederick's 'revolt against Emperor and Empire,' still felt something like horror at that infamous deed, still felt something of that secret repugnance, with which the honest Swedish colonel said to the traitor, Wallenstein :

*But the nobility, the officers ?  
Such a desertion, such a crime, my Lord,  
Is without parallel in history.*

"However justly Hebbel may condemn the 'complete lack of ideas' in Schiller's *Wallenstein*, Schiller has here uttered a great historic truth."

Pastor Dietrich : "*Wallenstein* lacking in ideas ?"

Manfred : "Hebbel says 'that the problem here attacked, namely the disproportion between an existing form of government and the great man who has outgrown it, could only be solved by the dawning perception in this man of a higher form of government ; and that Schiller not only did not solve this problem, but did not even define it clearly.' Schiller is absorbed with a problem of rank or etiquette : Was Wallenstein striving for the crown or not ? On the other hand, the historic Wallenstein really had a conception of a higher form of State : he wanted, in place of the religious civil wars, a mighty German Empire and a peace which—as the historic Wallenstein himself said—should contribute 'to the general welfare to the welfare

not merely of one part or another, but of all and every part, to the benefit alike of evangelists and Catholics, on the basis of a common law and a common justice.' And, supported on the army, Wallenstein dared to add : ' Are we not arrant fools to break each other's heads for the sake of others, when we could make the desired peace, since we have the armies in our power.' ' Are we not fools ? ' The Archduke of whom Liselotte wrote asked : '*Ne sommes nous tous pas bien sots, de nous tuer pour ces deux benets de Roy*' ? " It seems as though this question forced itself upon every one who is so incautious as to reflect. To cease to be arrant fools ! How weak and trivial in comparison with this seems the problem expounded by Schiller : ' Was it wrong to flatter myself with dreams of a royal hope ? ' If Wallenstein or Frederick II. had given the Geimans peace and unity, or even a clear notion of them, who would have found fault with their ' royal hopes ' ?

" Frederick II. realised and admitted that it was only fear of their officers that made his soldiers fight. If he had also realised what was clear to Cromwell before him and to Napoleon after him, namely, that ideas are more effectual than blows in inspiring soldiers with enthusiasm for a conflict, then perhaps Frederick II. might have had in him the makings of a great king, then perhaps he might have succeeded in uniting the Germans to fight once more on behalf of the power of the Empire, which had been reduced by the Thirty Years' War, instead of defending the shameful Peace of Westphalia and destroying the work of Prince Eugene by those civil wars into which he was seduced by a thirst for glory."

Pastor Dietrich : " Inspire soldiers with enthusiasm by means of ideas ? You seem to forget Frederick's address before the Battle of Leuthen. Never has a King uttered more inspiring words to his generals."

Manfred : " Are you also aware of the terms in which Frederick himself alluded to this famous address ? How miserably Frederick failed and faltered when it was a case of winning the allegiance of the subordinate officers, the soldiers, the common man, the German man, not by blows, but by that spiritual fire, which welds together strong and weak, great and

small, in the effort towards victory, is clearly revealed by his remark in 1760 after the failure of his siege of Dresden, when he once more repeated the threat, which he had been continually uttering for the last three years, of 'turning a somersault'—his poetic way of expressing suicide. The words of Frederick II. which I have in mind are prefaced by de Catt in his diary with the remark: 'No one ever thought himself a better judge of men than the King, and no one, I fancy, was more often deceived by them.' De Catt then proceeds to report the following words of Frederick II.: 'Should there be an engagement, I shall set an example by taking the lead; I shall employ my German rhetoric to inflame my officers. My German is not very good, but it will pass. At Parchwitz I made a speech to them before the Battle of Leuthen, and they were deeply impressed.' Then the King spoke of Voltaire, and quoted the saying of La Rochefoucauld: 'A happy self-deception is better than a sad truth,' and shortly after he concluded with the words: 'The poor soldiers get a very small share of honour, for from the outset they get more blows than bread.'

"The remark about 'happy self-deception' quoted by the King might be applied to the remarkable spiritual colour-blindness of Heinrich von Treitschke, who, in the face of this and similar admissions of Frederick the Great, could yet write: 'At the present day, as in the time of Frederick, our soldiers not merely honour their king as their war-lord, but also love him as their best and truest comrade, who shares with the common fighting man the joys and sorrows of the strife. The Prussians will never cease to expect from their kings the Frederician *payer de sa personne*; in days of doubt and distress they crave to hear the clear voice of their king.' The 'clear voice of their king' compelled these comrades, in return for 'a very small share of honour' and 'more blows than bread,' to shoot down their brothers in the interests of the Hohenzollerns. Royal wisdom from—*sans souci*!"

Pastor Dietrich: "You must admit that our King always stood loyally by his soldiers and shared in their joys and sorrows."

Manfred: "In accordance with Frederick's own words: the stick for the soldiers, the honour for the King! As regards

standing by the army, you must remember that, for a royal firebrand, who could not defend his own capital, the only safe place in the world was with his powerful army. Anywhere else he would have been seized and hanged. In the letter which Frederick wrote to Frau von Camas after the capture of Schweidnitz, he admitted with touching candour: 'Judge yourself whether it would be well to return to Berlin, as one runs the risk of fleeing to Spandau at the first alarm.' When at Mollwitz he sought safety elsewhere than with the army, he was within a hair's breadth of capture by the Austrians. He was careful in future to avoid such indiscretions.

"You and Herr von Treitschke maintain that Frederick II. faithfully shared the joys and sorrows of his soldiers. This, however, fails to impress me, unless it can be proved by examples. I just read you the description of the terrible winter campaign penned by the eye-witness, von Archenholtz. You saw the ill-clad, ill-nourished soldiers, freezing to no purpose; you heard how they 'crept into their tents, in order at least to warm some portions of their bodies against the bodies of their comrades.' What led you to suppose that Frederick II. was ever one of these comrades? Here is a trustworthy description of how the King was employing himself at that time. In his diary, de Catt describes Frederick II.'s winter quarters in the town of Freiberg in 1759-60:

"'During the winter the King did not go out. He was always engaged in reading, and always intent upon reading *multum*. He had concerts'." Manfred turned over the pages of Rodenbeck's *Historical Calendar of the Life of Frederick the Great*, in which are recorded the King's daily occupations and also extracts from his daily letters and poems. Then he continued:

"Thus not once did the King visit the camp of his freezing soldiers. He felt no concern for his comrades in arms who were perishing of the cold. But he had a warm heart. On November 29, he wrote to his French friend, d'Argens: 'There is a room at your disposal, not draughty, well-heated, and quite near to mine, which you will be able to reach without putting on an overcoat and a shawl over your mouth.' But d'Argens pre-

ferred to live quietly on his pension in Berlin. The fact that the ill-clad German soldiers were perishing of the cold in thousands did not induce the King to take any effectual measures to relieve their sufferings. But on December 13, he again implored d'Argens: 'I will send some one to escort you. . . . We will banish all draughts; I will have cotton-wool, furs, overcoats—in short, everything—ready to keep you warm.' But the Marquis was too cautious to risk the thorny proximity of the vainglorious poet. The soldiers in their frozen camp became to no purpose the prey of frightful pestilences. Meanwhile, in his rhymed epistle to his sister, Amalie, running to over twenty printed pages, the King extolled that fortune, whose capricious will had ordained that he who was responsible for this frightful war should sit in his warm room, while ten thousand soldiers, who had been forced and thrashed into a war which they loathed, were freezing to death. This poetic achievement may have gratified his sister Amalie's love of scandal. The King filled whole reams of paper with equally unreadable verses, and declared on January 7, 1760, in a letter to the Marquis d'Argens: 'A fool can always be sure of finding a bigger fool to admire him.' When d'Argens preferred only to play this bigger fool by letter and at a safe distance, the King consoled himself in his retreat behind the stove with the words:

'And so the wise man, when the storm is raging,  
Preserves within his breast unruffled calm.'

These and countless similar utterances of the King, together with his countless assurances to the contrary (*e.g.* 'I wish myself dead a hundred times,' 7. 1. 1760; 'Life becomes quite unbearable, when it has to be consumed in sorrow and mortal anxieties,' 15. 1. 1760) are still admired by many, who are minded to play that 'bigger fool' upon whose convenient presence Frederick II. knew that he could always rely. As I am not, like the Marquis d'Argens, in receipt of a Prussian pension I may perhaps be forgiven for not joining their number."

Later Manfred said: "German historians do much the same injustice to Gustavus Adolphus as Schiller did to Wallenstein: they represent him as an alien conqueror, whose premature

death saved the Germans from a foreign rule. These German historians, with that 'singular modesty' to which Bismarck once referred quite overlook the fact that Sweden was at that time still something like a German colony. In the seventeenth century the influence of the German Hanse and of the German reformation was still so strong that German was the language of the cultured classes, of the legislation,<sup>1</sup> and of the King of Sweden. If Gustavus Adolphus had conquered Germany and made himself emperor, Germany would no doubt have become protestant—that toleration desired by Wallenstein, and later by the disciples of Voltaire and by the Emperor Joseph II., would have been lacking—but to say that Germany would have become Swedish seems to me as absurd as to say that the tail would have wagged the dog. The death of Gustavus Adolphus did not involve the rescue of Germany from Swedish domination but the loss of Sweden as a German province."

When the conversation reverted to Wallenstein, Manfred said: "Frederick II. did not, like Wallenstein, strive for a higher form of state; on the contrary, by his 'revolt of Prussian particularism against the whole German commonwealth,' he fought, especially during the reign of the longsuffering Joseph II., for a lower form of state. In Germany it is too often the wrong people who die, and in German history one is driven again and again to ask oneself: What would have happened if only the right person had died? If Wallenstein had lived, there would have been a powerful Germany in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. If Joseph II. had treated the insurgent King of Prussia as the Emperor Ferdinand treated Wallenstein, the Battle of Valmy would not have been lost as a result of German squabbles, and the Austrian plan of reconquering Alsace and Lorraine as far as the Meuse, which Duke Charles Augustus expounded in a letter to Goethe in 1793, would not have been frustrated by Prussian treachery."

<sup>1</sup> On the strength of my own observations I can state that the extensive privileges dating from the year 1607, which King Charles IX. conferred upon the city of Gothenburg, were originally drafted in the German language. Also the letters concerning the restoration of Drontheim, which the King exchanged in 1681 with General Cidignon, of Lorraine, were—so Professor Sverre Pedersen of Drontheim informed me—written in the German language. W. H.

## FREDERICK II. AND CAESAR AS PATRIOTS

Pastor Dietrich : "Treat Frederick the Great like Wallenstein ! What high treason are you talking now !"

Hegemann : "I cannot help laughing at the absurdity of it. They would have had to catch him first."

Manfred : "Frederick's reader, de Catt, relates that in 1760 an Austrian attempt to seize the King almost succeeded. In the year 1770 the Austrians had him as a guest in their camp at Neustadt in Moravia. Cæsar coolly turned to account similar opportunities, and harvested much glory in consequence. The Austrian who betrayed the plan in 1760, and Emperor Joseph II. in 1770, were more good-natured than Cæsar ; they deserve places of honour in the Prussian heaven. The Great Elector showed less good-nature when he had the East Prussian nobleman, von Kalckstein, arrested on Polish territory, sent to Prussia, and there tortured and beheaded, because Kalckstein wanted to remain faithful to his former Polish liege lord. Perhaps Frederick II., when he abolished torture, was thinking of his own impending revolt against the Emperor, which was far more inexcusable than the insubordination of von Kalckstein ?"

At this point a cyclist arrived with Schlegel's *History of Ancient and Modern Literature*, which—if I remember rightly—had been obtained from the inexhaustible library of that obliging scholar, Benedetto Croce. Manfred eagerly turned over the leaves, and exclaimed after a few moments : "Here Schlegel makes a very remarkable comparison between the 'outlandish cultural barbarism' of Prussia on the one hand and—Hungary on the other : 'Matthias Corvin wanted to transform Hungary all at once into a thoroughly Latin and Italian country, as a result of which the national language was of course neglected. . . . Thus Hungary suffered in the fifteenth century very much as we Germans should have suffered in the eighteenth, if a great King, who, like Matthias Corvin, had no respect for or knowledge of any but foreign culture, had exercised as absolute sway over the whole of Germany as did Corvin over Hungary.' Would Germany then

have shared the fate of Hungary, if Frederick II. had been as powerful as Corvin was in Hungary? And does not Frederick II. in Prussia, far more than Gustavus Adolphus in Sweden, deserve to be called a champion of foreign cultural supremacy, in short, an alien conqueror?

"But here is the passage I was looking for concerning Klopstock's singularity in respect of his national sentiment. Please listen to it in its context." Manfred proceeded to read the following extract from Friedrich von Schlegel:

"There was lacking such a centre of union as men had looked for from Frederick II. and looked in vain. It has recently become the fashion to plead in excuse of this King of Prussia that, at the time when he mounted the throne, the German language and German scholarship were in such a condition that it was not surprising if a monarch so gifted turned away from them with loathing and contempt. This plea, however, is hardly justified. How much might have been done for German language and German culture by a king, in whose day science and culture were represented by such men as Klopstock, Winckelmann, Kant, Lessing, and, in addition to these intellects of the first rank, many other talented men, some of them born in his own provinces? When did a government ever have at its disposal at one time men of such eminence, with which to form an assemblage of scholars; and what sort of men were those foreigners—Voltaire alone excepted—to whom the King gave his preference? A Maupertuis, a La Mettrie—not even the most distinguished representatives of French letters. One can hardly, therefore, blame Klopstock, if a legitimate sense of his own worth led him to regard the neglect of German art and letters as something in the nature of a personal insult. He felt this insult bitterly, and avenged it by comparing Frederick in this respect with Caesar, by no means to the advantage of the former. It is true that in Germany in the eighteenth century there was never as much French written and spoken as there was Greek—good or bad—written and spoken in Rome in the days of Caesar. At that time, apart from a few famous ancient works, the Roman language had no more, or in any case no better, great classics than had modern German



literature before 1750. None the less, Caesar thought it worth his while to devote the most careful attention to the study and instruction of his language. He became in consequence the greatest orator of his age and one of the principal writers in his own language, a distinction which no one has ever achieved in a foreign language. . . . But the point of view on which this apology for Frederick II. is based is altogether wrong. If kings are not to bestow their favours upon letters until writers are sufficiently abundant, and until these have achieved an adequate degree of fame and perhaps exhausted their powers, there is surely nothing left for the monarch to do but to collect the most approved, the most harmless and the most infirm of these writers in a kind of asylum, under the name of an academy of learning. If, however, it is really proposed to develop and direct the intelligence of a nation, it is necessary to get hold of the young and not yet fully developed talents, to allow them free scope and generous assistance, and at the same time to guide in the right direction whatever can justly be described as advantageous to the commonwealth in a large, national sense. Klopstock's personal resentment is the more excusable, since he was unquestionably capable of diffusing a new spirit and a beneficent influence, not merely in poetry but in every branch and in the whole domain of literature. Klopstock's great spirit might have wrought as much and as manifold good in Germany as Voltaire wrought evil in France, if only he had been allowed the scope and opportunity, the power and the resources. Klopstock was conspicuous in the German world of that time by reason of his high national sentiment, which was shared by few and understood by none. All that was left to him was to give vent to it in his poetry. With the *Messiad*, in fact, begins the great revival of modern German literature ; so extraordinary are its merits and so fruitful in results . . . ."

Pastor Dietrich expressed his satisfaction that he had quoted correctly, while Manfred remarked : " It seems to me that we have in Schlegel the contest of a spiritual partisan of the wars of liberation with Goethe, who considered the war against France as mistaken, and therefore liked to invent excuses for the solitary opponent of such war, Frederick II. The Prussian historians

condemn Goethe's disapproval of the wars of liberation as 'error,' but they delight to quote Goethe's excuses for Frederick II. which were prompted by this disapproval. Incidentally that love of country, which made Schlegel one of the first to sound the battle-cry against Napoleon, was not love of Frederician Prussia, but, on the contrary, it was that imperial patriotism the existence of which Prussian historians deny and which our esteemed Professor Karl Stählin describes as 'error'."

### THE WIDER NATIONALITY AND THE SACRIFICE BY BISMARCK AND GOETHE OF DYNASTIC LOYALTY

Manfred then expressed the following view :

"I should like to quote here another utterance by your great Bismarck, an utterance, as it seems to me, of vast implications. Bismarck remarked in his *Reflections and Reminiscences* :

" 'I should not be surprised if the *force majeure* of the wider nationality were to destroy without mercy my dynastic loyalty and personal preference.' Consider the enormous significance which this utterance must acquire, if one envisages 'wider nationality' from Goethe's standpoint. And must not every man who is contending for a nobler culture strive towards the heights of Goethe's conception ! If a European believes with Goethe that 'the only important things are culture and barbarism,' how is he justified in halting on the path indicated by Bismarck ? Does not Bismarck's logic compel him to sacrifice without mercy his 'personal preference' for this or that special nation to the *force majeure* of the wider nationality ? Who, after this utterance of Bismarck, can allow himself to be misled by dynastic loyalty or personal preference as to Goethe's standpoint, or delay to take his stand on that level of culture 'where national hatred entirely disappears, where one stands to a certain extent above nationality, and feels the happiness or suffering of a neighbouring people as though it were one's own ?' When Goethe sacrificed his personal preference for German dynasts, in order to ally himself with the more worthy Napoleon and his idea of the internationalisation of Europe

under French leadership, was not Goethe anticipating word for word Bismarck's statesmanlike notion of 'merciless destruction of dynastic loyalty and personal preference ?'

Pastor Dietrich : "That is all dangerous, pacifist sentimentality. Suppose that we were insufficiently armed, and that the enemy once more invaded our country, as in those unhappy days, when the German people were lulled in dreams of world citizenship."

Manfred : "Do you believe that their position could ever again be as bad as it was in the days of Frederick II. ?"

Pastor Dietrich : "You are thinking of the devastations of the Seven Years' War ?"

Manfred : "Take even the peaceful intervals in Frederick's reign. Do you imagine that the Germans, after they have had a Goethe, would ever again give the title of 'our great King' to a ruler who thoroughly despised the German way of life, who made himself the mouthpiece of foreign ideas and spoke and wrote only French ? Imagine a French dictator in Berlin ; how much less dangerous than Frederick II. would he be to German life. It sounds absurd, but it is none the less undeniable, that German life in Berlin thrived better under Napoleon than under Frederick II. At the present day could a foreign dictator be anything more than an unwelcome tax-collector ? And Frederick II. himself imposed French tax-collectors on his Prussians. The great mass of the people have an income which borders on the minimum necessary for existence. That will have to be left to them, or else restored after seven years' deprivation, even if the tax-collectors should again be French. There is a trifling minority who have at their command more than the minimum necessary for existence. Are you so enchanted with the cultural achievements of this minority—no matter whether in Germany or in America or in any other country—that you would regard their loss as a great disaster ? In this connection it should not be forgotten that a not inconsiderable portion of Germany's economic surplus at the present day is employed to pay for foreign culture, not merely for French comedies, pictures and wines, women's clothes and the like, or for English racehorses, men's clothes, tobacco and men-

servants, but simply to meet the expenditure of rich, semi-educated Germans, who like to cut a dash in London, Paris or the Riviera. What does it matter whether this money is spent by Germans or by foreigners ?

"In Greater Berlin—as a result of the almost absolute control of the Prussian nobles and bureaucrats and their conspicuous lack of sympathetic understanding—600,000 human beings are living in tenement-houses, each room of which is occupied by five or more persons. Hundreds of thousands of children are without any playground. That is all frightful ! But would these horrors born of bureaucratic rule become more or less comprehensible if—possibly as the result of an unsuccessful war—the number of the victims were doubled or trebled ? Do you believe that in that case one cigarette the less would be smoked in Berlin, or that a single Prussian of the ruling classes would contemplate the world with one jot less self-complacency ? And is not this almost equally true of Paris or of any other great city of the white race, whose mindless rulers regard with indifference the most degrading poverty, but demand that men should work themselves into enthusiasm on behalf of the most trivial absurdities, and 'that peaceful peasants bound by ties of marriage should shoot down each other, the one on behalf of Hapsburg, the other on behalf of Hohenzollern interests,' as Bismarck daringly expressed it, when he laid bare this hellish abomination of so-called patriotism. At the present day it is no longer a question of those dynastic interests to which Bismarck referred, but of stock exchange interests."

Pastor Dictrich exclaimed laughingly : "What desperate paradoxes you are indulging in ! Then he became thoughtful. 'You insist then,' he said, smiling good-naturedly at Manfred, 'that our great Frederick was not so wonderfully great after all ?'"

### WHO CALLED FREDERICK II. "GREAT" ?

Manfred : "I fancy that Frederick first publicly received the nickname 'the Great' in the year 1740 after the Battle of

Mollwitz. Alrcady before this Voltaire had in his letters described the Crown Prince as a future 'King Solomon'— 'He treated me like some supernatural being; I answered him as though he were a Solomon; such titles cost nothing,' Voltaire remarked later with reference to this appellation. It was in the theatre at Lille, where his *Mahomet*, which had been forbidden in Paris, was being performed, that Voltaire received the news from Frederick that he had won the Battle of Mollwitz. Voltaire read out Frederick's despatch to the audience in the interval, and naturally received the most enthusiastic applause, since Frederick's victory had been won against the German Emperor, from whom the French were at that time trying to wrest Flanders. Two points are, however, worthy of notice. In the first place, the great military hero, on whom this applause was bestowed, had in reality lost the battle, of which he boasted himself the victor in an express message to Voltaire, 'but'— this is how that enthusiastic Prussian, Hans Delbrück, describes the victory— 'when the King, who appears to have been in a state of violent agitation, had been got out of the way, Schwerin succeeded in persuading the infantry and artillery to advance once more.' It is also noteworthy that the play, *Mahomet*, at the first performance of which Voltaire proclaimed his friend Frederick to the exultant audience as the 'great King,' is the same play in connection with the translation of which Goethe sixty years later openly asserted his doubts regarding the greatness of Prussia and his confidence in Napoleon."

"It was not until after the Battle of Rossbach that Frederick II. was extolled as 'the Great' in England and France. Macaulay, who apart from this is unable to discover much good in Frederick II., becomes lyrical in his enthusiasm, when he speaks of the Battle of Rossbach: 'Never since the dissolution of the empire of Charlemagne had the Teutonic race won such a field against the French,' which 'achieved the great deliverance of central Europe' and guarded 'the old freedom of the Rhine' . . . which, moreover, deprived the French of America, and by which Napoleon's plan—anticipated by Kaunitz and Madame de Pompadour—for uniting the European continent against English world-supremacy was frustrated by Seydlitz.

But of all this Macaulay says nothing here, so that Prussian historians are able to quote his panegyric without any cuts. The rest of Macaulay's remarks concerning Frederick II. are rarely quoted in Prussia.

"This title, 'the Great,' conferred by foreign countries in return for services rendered, is surprisingly reminiscent of those three German royal titles, 'which,' as the Emperor Frederick once expressed it, 'we received in the shameful time of Napoleon I., in order that thereby the disintegration of Germany might be permanently sealed.' These words of the Emperor Frederick have a good German sound, but in consequence of that Prussian infatuation, from which it was but natural that he should suffer, he could not speak quite such good German sense as Prince Eugene, who said to his Emperor that the imperial councillors who had induced their rulers to recognise the Prussian royal crown and consequently the disintegration of Germany deserved to be whipped. This was Mirabeau's account. In the *Researches into the History of Brandenburg and Prussia* (170), it is stated that Prince Eugene 'wanted to have these ministers hanged.' Frederick II. knew very well why he called Prince Eugene the 'hero of Germany.'"

Pastor Dietrich: "Alas for poor Germany, if God had not sent the Prussian kings. It was thanks to them that 'Prussia became a pioneer of reforms, of enlightenment, of liberal institutions and of a reasonable freedom,' as Moltke already admitted in 1832. And we shall always feel gratitude and reverence towards Frederick the Great as the greatest of these kings."

## WILLIAM II. GREATER THAN FREDERICK THE GREAT

Manfred: "There, I think, you are doing an injustice to the ruling King of Prussia, the Emperor William II. Or do you doubt that the French would be delighted to extol the Emperor William II. as 'the Great,' if he were to restore Alsace-Lorraine to the French and compensate himself by a sudden attack on Austria, as was done and boasted of by Frederick II. ? Do you doubt that the Prussian army now as then would prove itself

superior to the Austrian ? Do you think that William II., like Frederick II., would run away from the first battle ? And then suppose the impossible case that William II., like Frederick II., was entirely French in his way of thinking and collected French writers round him in Berlin—for instance, Zola, who was almost stoned in Paris, and others ; suppose he paid them annual pensions and showered upon them other honours which were denied to Germans. As late as 1882 the French historian, the Duc de Broglie, exclaimed angrily : ‘ The French historians have merely repeated with servile complaisance the words which Frederick II. dictated to them, and it is neither useful nor instructive to pay any attention to these historians ’ (171). If a successor of Frederick II. were at the present day to flatter the enemies of Germany, as was done by the ‘ great ’ king, do you doubt for a moment that such a king would be acclaimed by the anti-German press all over the world ? ”

Pastor Dietrich was silent. Manfred continued : “ You cannot doubt it, but you think that acclamation of Frederick II. was justified, and you think that it is the duty of Prussian historians to join in this international chorus of homage. To be sure at the present time an attack on Austria would be much more excusable than it was in the days of Frederick II., because, as a result of Prussia’s revolt against the great German commonwealth, Austria has now become finally separated from the Empire. None the less, it is difficult to conceive that William II. would be so unscrupulous as to repeat these infamies in order to purchase great glory at a modest price.

Pastor Dietrich : “ Are you not forgetting that Frederick’s claim to greatness is above all based on his unexampled fortitude during seven years of the direst need ? ”

Manfred : “ You are referring to the four years from Kolin until the death of the Empress of Russia. Do you doubt that, if Bismarck’s bad dream had come true, and if Europe were to-day united against Prussian Germany, William II., with England as his ally, could hold out far longer, or, even if he had only Austria for ally, could at any rate hold out for four years, until some unexpected occurrence should produce a more favourable situation, until, for instance, the Russians had been

transformed from enemies into allies, or, if you like, until the Indians had intervened on behalf of the dear Germans. And if at the end of the four years nothing more had been achieved than the maintenance of the old frontiers, do you doubt that William's marvellous 'greatness' would be extolled to the skies? If William II. keeps aloof from all these things, it is not because he is less 'great' than Frederick II., but because he is morally superior to him, because he is restrained by a noble sense of 'seemliness'; of that I am convinced."

"I once heard the French ambassador, Alfred Dumaine, on the ground of his own observation and quite impartially, speak with high appreciation of the 'truly brilliant qualities' of the Emperor William II. Dumaine praised the Emperor's 'extraordinary power of rapid mental assimilation, enhanced by wide reading, and a zealous determination to display the knowledge he has gained.' Dumaine described your Emperor as 'a capital talker, who is far more successful than most other rulers in finding something direct and personal to say to every one, who can develop an idea or express an opinion and is glad to get a reply from the person he addresses' (172). Dumaine declared: 'Kaiser Wilhelm always contrives that the people with whom he converses shall feel flattered.' When Professor Peabody returned from Berlin to Boston after delivering his exchange lectures on Social Ethics, he said to me: 'The Kaiser is a *charmeur*.' On the other hand Dumaine told me of some very distressing exhibitions of tactlessness on the part of the Kaiser, of all kinds of cheap jests, of the superficiality of his boasted learning, and of his craving for approval and his determination to astonish the world by something unexpected. As I think it over now, the resemblance to Frederick II. seems to me quite startling. I specially remember one incident on which Dumaine lay stress. He told me of a letter which William II., in 1878, when he was still Crown Prince, wrote to a young lady. He wrote (I am translating from the French): 'This warm heart will always beat for you until the day when it is struck by the well-directed bullet of some anarchist.' The manner in which William envisaged his martyrdom, and at the same time tried to make capital out of it for a gallant adventure



is extraordinarily like the manner in which Frederick II. tried to turn his threats of suicide at once to diplomatic and poetic account. But how much more discreet is William II., as compared with the great King! How much less he writes and composes! How much more diligently he travels! How much more in important decisions he allows better-informed persons to have their say. How much milder is his condemnation of the new German literature compared with Frederick II.'s *dissertation*. To me personally it appears unquestionable that William II. not only ranks higher morally, but is also 'greater.' Only, in the time of Frederick II., public opinion was not so developed or was more sternly suppressed than at the present day. Not long ago the President of Harvard University, Professor Lowell, expressed to me his astonishment at the unrestricted freedom of the German Press: 'A paper like *Simplicissimus* would not be tolerated in any other country.' The *Matinées du Roi de Prusse*, in which the 'great' king was attacked in 1766 something in the manner of *Simplicissimus* was a mortally dangerous venture, and copies of it were for the most part only circulated secretly. Even at the present day it is probable that no one in Germany would be suffered to treat Frederick the 'Great' in the manner of *Simplicissimus*, whereas William II. can safely be ridiculed to almost any extent. So long live the Emperor William II. the 'Greatest'!"

#### WOODROW WILSON AS PANEGYRIST OF THE POPULAR GOVERNMENT OF WILLIAM II.

Pastor Dietrich: "I should be the last to question the greatness of William II., but your doubts of the greatness of Frederick II. are rather distressing. You should not forget that belief in the greatness of this remarkable king is one of the most precious and potent appurtenances of the German crown. Why not honour and rejoice in it?"

Manfred answered this question of the famous cleric with a story which, under the altered conditions of the present day, has acquired still greater interest than it had at the time when Manfred related it, in the spring of the year 1913.

Manfred: "Prussian policy is built up on dangerous legends, and its nature was once defined by Maria Theresa in the following words: 'to act in the Prussian manner and at the same time try to preserve the semblance of honour.' Maria Theresa was thinking then of the foreign policy of Prussia, but her words are true to a still greater degree of the internal conditions of Prussia, where, as you have just hinted, men try to make capital out of a crown possession, which has long since been devoured by moths and rust. Every well-informed person at the present day knows how deadly and soul-destroying was Frederick's influence, and yet they are anxious that he should be admired, and even that the world should be healed in accordance with his monstrous example. In connection with the 'great' Frederick a legend has grown up regarding the excellence of the Prusso-German administration, which is an obstacle in the way of its healthy development and improvement and the collapse of which at a critical moment may have serious results. And in my opinion it is not the foreigners who are fooled by this legend, but, on the contrary, the foreigners who use it to fool the Germans.

"The respect with which the internal administration of Prussia is at present regarded in foreign countries is very curious. In a certain sense Germany certainly has what is called a 'good Press.' Go to Australia or France, to Spain or North America, you will hear the excellence and thoroughness of the Prussian administration spoken of with wellnigh idolatrous veneration. When about two years ago in Paris I mentioned to old Professor Charles Gide the official statistics, which showed that in Greater Berlin there were about twice as many people in overcrowded rooms as in Paris (173), he laughed at me and insisted that there must be some mistake. The eminent Berlin political economist, Rudolf Eberstadt, who took great pains to show up the unspeakable housing conditions in the big German cities, assured me that even the most modest demands for reform fell upon deaf ears in the German cities, since it was always possible to refer complacently to the boundless admiration of German conditions expressed by foreigners.

"One of the most absurd consequences of this romantic

enthusiasm for Germany came to my notice a few years ago at St. Louis, where an American University Professor delivered an address which will not be forgotten. This Professor, Woodrow Wilson, has in fact since become president of the United States, so that, in view of the high position occupied by its author, this address at St. Louis will soon find a place of honour among the weapons for resisting any further democratisation of Germany. Why try to alter and democratise, when the President of the United States already in the year 1909 set the 'popular government' in Germany above that of the United States? I recall it as vividly as though it were yesterday. It was on the occasion of a great club evening. Woodrow Wilson explained to us<sup>1</sup> how and why the attempt to govern democratically in America had completely failed, and declared that serious endeavours must be made to imitate Germany. He spoke brilliantly:

" 'You know that at present government in the United States is not in the hands of the people . . . for the past century you have been getting farther and farther away from the people. Is it not worth trying to see whether successful popular government is not as good and as practicable in the United States as it is in any foreign country? '

" I assure you, this Professor and many other people who are filled with enthusiasm for German administration and its excellence are as ignorant of German conditions as Tacitus was of ancient Germany. They use a foreign country for the purpose of illustrating their views, just as, when we were boys, we used to tell stories about the Indians, or as Montesquieu told stories about the Persians. If it should ever happen that these foreign admirers of Germany were called upon to make a stand on behalf of their boasted conviction, they would all drop away, and even if necessary maintain exactly the opposite. If required, these gentlemen would then suddenly discover what Bismarck, for instance, discovered about this far-famed German self-government: 'Self-government means an aggravation of bureaucracy and an increase in the number of officials and of

<sup>1</sup> This astonishing speech, delivered on March 9, 1909, has also appeared in print.

their powers and interference in private life. . . . Sooner or later the "weak point" must be reached, when we shall be crushed beneath the burden of clerkdom, especially in the subordinate bureaucracy.' (The bad German in which this menacing 'weak point' is referred to suggests that it may have already come and that it will never again depart, but will soon be transformed, under the burden of the bureaucracy, into the 'dead point'—peace to its ashes!—which Bismarck seems to have remembered from his boyhood instruction in physics.)

"Erroneous political legends are dangerous, and it seems to me that the Frederician legend is one of the most dangerous.

"So long as such legends are 'pious,' so long as they do no harm or are even useful—if one is prepared to admit that falsehood can ever be useful—they may be tolerated. But the bloodstained legend of Frederick the Great, the Frederician legend that the 'heavy and degrading burden of his royal existence' brought a blessing to the German people, is a very impious and a very injurious legend, and the 'personal preference' for it deserves to be 'destroyed without mercy.' When Bismarck said: 'I should not be surprised if the *force majeure* of the wider nationality were to destroy without mercy my dynastic loyalty and personal preference. The task of perishing with decency is incumbent in politics, and not merely in German politics, also upon other and more justified emotions,' the shrewd statesman doubtless did not mean to exclude dangerous dynastic or nationalistic legends from the things whose task it is to perish with decency."

## BISMARCK ON THE POPULARITY OF BLOODSHED

"Macaulay writes that, after the Battle of Rossbach the picture of the 'great King' was painted on many English tavern signboards, and that even in his own day one would still find on the walls of old-fashioned English parlours twenty pictures of Frederick the Great for every one of the English king, George II. The English had good reason to admire Frederick II., since he had made himself so remarkably useful to them. There are romantic Germans who would like to see

in these things the proof of Frederick's greatness. Bismarck was more penetrating; the wide circulation of certain royal portraits wrung from him the following historic warning against the dangers which arise out of the Frederician and similar blood-stained legends. Bismarck wrote 'to sons and grandsons as a guide to the understanding of the past and as instruction for the future:'

" ' Frederick the Great has not propagated his breed; but his position in our past history must excite in every one of his successors the desire to emulate him. . . . It may be said of the European nations in general that those kings are deemed most truly national and are most popular, who have won for their country the most bloodstained laurels, perhaps only to trifle them away again. Charles XII. obstinately guided Sweden towards the decline of her greatness, and yet one finds his portrait in the houses of the Swedish peasants as a symbol of Swedish glory more often than that of Gustavus Adolphus. Peaceable civilian labour for the welfare of the nation does not as a rule evoke such admiration and enthusiasm from the Christian peoples of Europe as the readiness to squander triumphantly upon the field of battle their blood and possessions. Louis XIV. and Napoleon, whose wars ruined their country and bore small fruit, have remained the pride of the French, while the peaceful labours of other monarchs and rulers are thrust into the background. When I reflect upon the history of the European nations, I cannot recall a single instance where honest and devoted labour for the peaceful prosperity of the nations has made a stronger appeal to popular sentiment than military glory, successful battles and conquests even of hostile territory.'

" So much for Bismarck. The French, by the bye, have ceased to call their Louis 'great'—perhaps because he did not win enough battles. I congratulate the Prussians on their willingness to preserve the 'greatness' of Frederick II. as a picturesque nickname. Historical studies would be very tedious for the simple-minded without this varied collection of 'the fat,' 'the great,' 'the slothful,' 'the terrible.' So long however, as one allows these romantic nicknames to exercise an educational influence, the delighted pupils will, in obedience

to the law of least resistance, become great, fat, slothful or terrible or all combined. Frederick the Great was in error when he maintained that it was only fear of their own officers that made his soldiers brave; there lurks in most men a trace of that 'antediluvian animal,' which the Baron vom Stein discovered in the Brandenburg and Pomeranian nobles, and something of the delight in killing of the beast of prey. When Frederick the Great made a present of money to the victims of a fire, he replied to their fervent expressions of gratitude with the simple words, 'I am doing my duty.' The incomparable modesty which these fortunate creatures discerned in this utterance of their sovereign made the moment of his presence the most solemn moment in their lives. If the victims of the fire had received tenfold the amount or even full compensation for their losses from some commonplace insurance agent, who had never slain even one of his fellow men, they would possibly have felt nothing like the joy which they experienced at receiving a gift of alms as a consolation for their loss from the hands of a king, who had himself been instrumental in kindling many far more devastating fires.

"The stepchildren of fortune often suffer from a craving for romance, which impels them, if 'great' kings are lacking, to gloat in the exploits of brigands or hangmen, but among all the varieties of popular clowns the most popular is that which Frederick the Great dubbed 'the terrible clown.' Or, to repeat Bismarck's words: 'Those kings are deemed most truly national and are most popular, who have won for their country the most bloodstained laurels, only perhaps to trifle them away again'."



## APPENDICES

### EPILOGUE

MANFRED was one of the victims of the sinking of the steamer *Alsatia*, on which he had embarked at the beginning of 1916 in the service of the German-American Red Cross, and since that date there have occurred in Germany many of those revolutionary changes, which he did not desire, but which Goethe, for whom Manfred cherished the most profound veneration, declared to be a necessary condition for the healthy development of German intellectual life. In any case, under the altered circumstances, I held it to be my duty to communicate to my fellow-countrymen the objections raised by Manfred against the Frederician legend. I hope from my heart that these objections will provoke a complete and authoritative refutation.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Now that more than ten years have elapsed since these conversations were first recorded, it seems to me that their disquieting contents, which I have discussed with a number of experts, may be summed up somewhat as follows :

The distressing upshot of the observations recorded in this volume will astonish no one who is aware of the very much greater difficulties which Prussian historians have encountered during the last few decades in their attempts to do their duty towards Frederick the Great. "Written history is one long euphemism," said Goethe, thereby showing his perception of the difficulties of the historian, who has to make an often very undelectable past appear delectable to his nation and try to drag its infamies out of the mire. But the whitewashing of Frederick the Great called for truly superhuman powers. Schiller despaired of it; when in 1791 he abandoned his attempt at a poetic eulogy of Frederick II., he wrote to Körner : "Frederick II. is no subject for me. . . . I cannot feel sufficient sympathy or enthusiasm for his character to undertake the gigantic task of idealising him." But since Schiller's day the gradual publication of the old archives has inevitably brought to light more and more incriminating evidence against the "great King," and youthful and undisciplined hotheads (for instance,



the right radical Maurenbrecher, or the left radical Mehring, or Professor Max Lehmann of Göttingen, the learned biographer of Baron vom Stein, who was himself provoked to indignation by Frederick, or Onno Klopp, with whose writings Manfred Ellis—otherwise so widely read—was quite unacquainted, and a number of others) were rash enough to try to persuade the public that it would be as well to set some limits to their admiration of the great King. The author of these notes, who was brought up in an atmosphere of reverence for the national cult of Frederick, was for the most part horrified at the answers which he received from many of our most respected historians, when he submitted to them the heretical notions of Manfred Ellis contained in this book as something in the nature of “revelations.” Professor Gerhard Ritter, a distinguished light of the new University at Hamburg, wrote : Ellis is only dishing up long-known facts. Professor Cartellieri, who recommended the present volume for study by his students at the history-school of Jena University, of which he is head, declared : “Scholars will of course find little that is new to them in the book.” Hermann Onken, of Munich, said : “Up to now estimates of Frederick II. have dealt with him for the most part only as a positive quantity. I should not be surprised if the publication of the other side of the picture were to yield a surprising result.” Professor Onken also said to me : “Naturally Frederick II. no longer counts for anything as a political economist.” He also referred to the energetic repudiation of Frederick II. by the great Prussian reformers of the wars of liberation, and continued : “Frederick II. can only be called great, if one is prepared to say that he was legitimised by Bismarck.” As though such gifted cooks and sorcerers as Bismarck (or Napoleon) could not from the worst-stocked larder conjure up something which to the undiscerning would present the delusive semblance of a nourishing and even appetising meal, at any rate for a short while. Moreover, the recent collapse of that Prussian little Germany, which Frederick II. and Bismarck were at pains to substitute for the great Central European Empire of Prince Eugene and Maria Theresa, drove inveterate opportunists to reflect whether the German nation, when it repudiated the most important of the territories available for its expansion or separated them off by a customs barrier, had chosen the right means for preserving, let alone developing its once supreme power. “The great East, which Germany lost through Frederick’s irresponsible intrigues,” said Ellis, “was of more importance for Germany than India is for England ; it was the German India, Australia and Canada combined. Germany will prosper even without the East and in spite of Frederick II., just as Sweden prospered in spite of the follies of Charles XII. ; but neither Sweden nor Germany can ever again become a Great Power of the first rank, like England, Russia or America.”

In the stress of the world war Germany attempted suddenly, and without adequate preparation, to reunite once more that German Central Europe, the foundations and possibilities for the development of which had been irrevocably destroyed by Frederick II. But the sudden determination to regard the sins of 1740 to 1914 as though they had never happened was hopeless romanticism and entailed needless bloodshed.

Few of the lay admirers of the "great King" are aware that long ago Prussian historians disposed almost unanimously of our blissful conviction that Frederick the Great pursued any great or national ends. It might almost be said that at the present day it is possible to distinguish the professional admirer of Frederick, *i.e.* the Prussian historian, in contrast to the lay admirer, by the energy with which—in private—he is prepared to defend the "great King" from any suspicion of pro-Germanism.

In this connection the following extract from a work of the Berlin Professor, Hans Delbrück, merits consideration. Delbrück wrote in his *Origin of the Seven Years' War* (174) as follows :

"Koser and Naudé, those distinguished specialists in the history of the Frederician epoch, . . . proved that Frederick did not conclude the Westminster Agreement in order to protect Hanover and Germany against French invasion ; on the contrary, Frederick himself repeatedly suggested to the French that they should invade Hanover.

"This fact entirely transforms our conception of the King's character. Ranke invests it with a glamour of national idealism and splendour. . . . Frederick is represented as perceiving already the identity of Prussian and German interests ; it is in order to protect the German frontiers simultaneously with his own that he adopts that position which finally brings down upon him the combined antagonism of all the great continental powers." Delbrück continues :

"According to Koser and Naudé no such ideas entered into Frederick's head, or, if they did, he had no intention of doing anything on their behalf. Although he was only thirty-four years of age when he returned home from the second Silesian war, he proposed to leave to his successors the actual development of a Prussian Great Power. In order to protect himself he invited the French to invade a German province, and when he was thereby threatened with a Russian invasion, he concluded that agreement by which he incurred the odium both of the Russians and the French. This proceeding wears an even worse aspect now that Bailleu has proved (175) that this policy of changing sides—first suggesting to the French that they should undertake an invasion and then concluding with the English an agreement in order to protect himself against the consequences of this invasion—was in no way called for by the circumstances. The objections of contemporary

commentators to the uncertainty and vacillation of Frederician policy, remarks the same writer, seem to me only too abundantly justified. That policy was at once suspicious and credulous, at once short-sighted and over-hasty. If two foreign statesmen put their heads together, Frederick at once assumed that they were planning a coalition. If there were rumours of troops on the march, he suspected an attack on Prussia. Naudé also criticises the not infrequent errors both of diplomacy and of generalship of which the King was guilty at that time, and he admits that in the field of diplomacy Kaunitz completely got the better of the Prussian King." Delbrück continues :

"This criticism errs on the side of leniency rather than of severity.

"Every single measure—even every single military measure—adopted by the King before the outbreak of the Seven Years' War—reveals an utter lack of reflection and judgment—upon the hypotheses assumed by Koser and Naudé—and the King seems the more contemptible, in that not once had he in view any great aim, nothing but peace, peace, rest. . . ." Delbrück continues : "Even before this terrible diminution of the fame of the great King, this *capitis diminutio maxima* dawned upon the consciousness of the investigators themselves, still less upon that of the general public, there were evidences of a reaction against it."

Hans Delbrück and Max Lehmann believe, in contradiction to many of the leading Prussian historians, that the honour of Frederick the Great both as a statesman and as a general is redeemed by the assumption that he was not drawn into the Seven Years' War against his will, but brought it about deliberately and for a conscious aim.

Delbrück continues :

"The truth of the matter is : Frederick certainly never regarded himself in the light of an ideal champion of German interests, but he was fully convinced that it was his duty to make Prussia a Great Power capable of self-defence, and for this purpose he worked with profound cunning to bring about a great war, by which he might bring under his sway Saxony and West Prussia. . . ."

Bismarck appears not to have shared Delbrück's view of the policy of Frederick II., or at any rate not to have approved this policy. In any case Bismarck said (176) on June 30, 1877, to Dr. Lucius : "We are not pursuing a policy such as that of Frederick II. at the beginning of the Seven Years' War, namely, of falling suddenly upon the enemy who is preparing to attack. It would, in fact, mean breaking eggs, out of which very dangerous chickens might be hatched."

Professor Delbrück further remarks :

"Those who maintain that Frederick ordered the partial mobilisation" (which led to the outbreak of the Seven Years' War) "by way of a demonstration, exhibit the King in the light of the exact opposite

of a statesman, namely, that of a nervous and irresolute weakling. If the King wanted to have peace, he ought either to have kept quiet, and given his antagonists no pretext for action, or he ought to have mobilised completely and made the attack before they were united and armed. It is not enough to say that the King's mistakes were due to his excessive love of peace; these mistakes were so monstrous, the folly of the partial mobilisation was so flagrant, that they cannot be passed over with a casual admission. To crown his folly, Frederick selected for the march against the Russians regiments from Berlin and the Saxon frontier, and to replace these had others marched from Further Pomerania. However much we may concur with recent commentators in disparaging Frederick as a statesman, we are not justified even in one single instance in regarding him as an utter fool."

Professors Delbrück and Lehmann have, as already mentioned, been unable to convince the learned world of the validity of their defence of Frederick II. The conclusion drawn by Manfred Ellis from this repudiation (in which he concurred) was that which Delbrück rejected, namely, that Frederick the Great was only to be explained by what Delbrück calls "utter folly."

### GOETHE'S "FRITZIAN PARTIALITY" AND FREDERICK THE GREAT IN ITALY

PRUSSIAN historians insist that Goethe confessed his "Fritzian partiality," and in proof of this partiality, the author of these memoirs has frequently been referred to an episode during the "Italian journey." At a little market town in Sicily Goethe experienced some difficulty in finding a lodging. He relates: "Finally an elderly citizen came to the rescue," etc. and led us "to the market, where the most respectable of the citizens were seated, in accordance with their ancient custom; they were conversing with one another, and desired that we too should converse with them. We had to tell them about Frederick II., and their sympathy with this great King was so lively that we concealed the fact of his death, in order that we might not incur the odium of our hosts by bringing them such distressing news." What will not a hungry traveller do for the sake of a tolerable supper? This jest of Goethe's is reminiscent of the much more passionate admiration which was felt for the King in Venice. v. Archenholtz in his *History of the Seven Years' War* relates that the Frederician enthusiasm of the monks of the Venetian Monastery of S. Giovanni "found vent in a furious scrimmage. The monks fought lustily with one another in the refectory on behalf of Maria Theresa and of Frederick, plates, dishes and mugs serving as weapons. The King's party was, however, almost always the stronger in Venice." From this the authentic Prussian

"historian" cannot fail to deduce that Frederick II. was a "great" King. With the more cultured representatives of Italy these "historians" prefer to have nothing to do; otherwise they might quote the opinion of the Italian poet, Vittorio Alfieri, who, in his account of his visit to Berlin in the year 1769, wrote: "The states of the great Frederick made upon me the impression of one huge barracks. It increased twofold and threefold my horror at this impious militarism, which is the sole source of despotic power and the necessary and invariable consequence of so many thousands of mercenaries. I was introduced to the King. The sight of him inspired in me no sentiment of admiration or respect, but rather indignation and even rage, and these feelings grew stronger in me every day, the more I saw of those conditions which are not what they should be, but the deceitful trappings of which simulate glory. The King's minister, Count Fink, who presented me, asked me why, since I came in the service of my king, I was not wearing uniform on this day (!). I answered: "Because it seems to me that there are enough uniforms already at this court." The King greeted me with the usual formal phrases. I observed him closely; I looked him right in the eyes with great attention, and I thanked heaven that I was not born to be the slave of this man."

In his later years Goethe got to know the Prussian Crown Prince, afterwards Frederick William IV., and finally placed great hopes on him. Goethe's words concerning him reported by Eckermann in 1828 contain above all an appreciation of Napoleon; they might almost be construed as a criticism of Frederick II. and of Frederician Prussia. They sound as though Goethe, in view of the change in Prussian opinion represented by the young Crown Prince, felt prepared to conclude peace with that Prussia which he had all his life avoided. Goethe did not suspect that those non-Prussian flashes of intellectual brilliance which he perceived in the Prussian Crown Prince were a foreshadowing of madness.

## NOTES

1. Erich Marcks made the same observation in his essay: "Prince Bismarck and the House of Hohenzollern" (*Hohenzollern Yearbook*, vol. ii.). There we find words which express almost exactly the same thing as Manfred Ellis had in mind when he spoke of Frederick II.'s "lack of a fatherland." Marcks said: "That which Bismarck regarded as of the greatest personal value and as most characteristic of him, is lacking in his royal predecessor (Frederick II.): spiritual connection with his country and his house, with the nation and the divinity." Manfred described the King as *déraciné*.

2. Cf. the letters of Frederick the Great to Fredersdorf in the edition published by Johannes Richter in 1926.

3. In "The Dawn of Day."

4. Preuss, *Urk.* ii. 226.

5. Cf. Fourth Conversation.

6. i. 427.

7. The diaries of von Lehnendorf have, as far as I know, not yet been published in the original text. But since 1907, K. F. Schmidt, of Lotzen, has published translations with F. A. Perthes, of Gotha.

8. E.g. before Freiburg, 1743.

9. Cf. p. 130 ff.

## WHO WAS THE AUTHOR OF THE *MATINÉES DU ROI*?

10. Manfred presented me with a copy of the small original edition of *Les Matinées du Roi de Prusse, écrites par lui-même*, Berlin, 1766, and remarked: "When I once saw a very clever actor mimic an acquaintance who was a conceited drunkard, I said to myself: 'How curious, this actor is witty, and yet the person he is mimicking is not at all witty.'" I could not help thinking of the remarkable dispute which was started in 1924 by Baron von Massenbach, the instructor of the cadet corps, in regard to the authorship of this old satire. Von Massenbach suggests—and he hints that this view is shared by William II.—that the work in question was not a satire on Frederick II., but that it was written by that monarch himself and is a masterpiece. In reply to the indignant protests from Frederick's official admirers, Dr. von Massenbach wrote (in the *Acht-Uhr-Abendblatt*, No. 162, 1925): "The agitation caused in the whole Frederician guild is not surprising; for they are not really concerned whether the 'Matinées' is a forgery or not, but whether these maxims of post-Bismarckian political science, in which these Fredericians have believed and under the influence of which they published in 1913—for the jubilee of the Emperor William II.—the thirteen volumes of Frederick's works, are out of date or not. This

is where these historians of the age of Wilhelm II. scent the risk of a compulsory abdication! Hence all the tumult which they are raising in defence of their own infallibility, because an attempt has been made to encroach upon that territory in which they claim exclusive rights. The age of unbiassed examination of history has indeed only just begun to dawn.' This edifying dispute whether a work, which was for 150 years accounted a satire on Frederick II., is not after all his own composition, recalls a passage in the *Vie de Frédéric* of J. Ch. Th. de Lanveaux, published in 1787: "For some time a letter regarding the weaknesses of a great princess had been going the round of Berlin. After every one had secured copies of it, the King forbade its circulation. It was subsequently discovered that this letter had been penned by himself." To me personally, the contents of the *Matinées* seem too witty to have been written by the King. In this connection it seems to me significant that Preuss, the royal historiographer of Brandenburg, in the *Table chronologique* of the great 1857 edition of the *Œuvres*, reproduces without contradiction the report that the *Matinées* were composed by a French officer, an adjutant of the Marshal of Saxony (Preuss adds that his name was Bonneville), who after the publication of the book (in Holland), ventured to enter Prussia, and was imprisoned in Spandau for the rest of his life. More important than the question whether this report is correct is the fact that the royal historiographer could believe it and at the same time extol the generosity of the King and Prussian freedom of the Press. I ought to mention that Massenbach's theory of the authorship of the *Matinées* is supported by the fact that "that arrogant and muddle-headed grumbler" (as Nietzsche calls him) Carlyle expressed his adherence to my view, as opposed to that of Massenbach.

11. Cf. p. 78.

12. iii. 441.

13. Cf. *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen Geschichte*, which contains long explanations how great or how small a debt of gratitude the Prussian nation owes to the Jesuits.

14. Cf. A. F. Busching, *Character Friedrichs des Zweyten*, etc., 2nd edition, Karlsruhe, 1789.

15. *Memoirs*, iv. 439.

16. *Œuvres*, xxvii. 3.

17. *Urk.* ii. 231.

18. Preuss, *Urk.* ii. 233.

19. *Œuvres Posth.* xii. 39.

20. Preuss, iii. 335.

21. This famous utterance of Winckelmann is contained in his letters to C. Füssli and L. Usterie, and is also quoted by Treitschke (*Deutsche Geschichte*, i. p. 48). It runs: "I was born under tyrants.... My fatherland is oppressed by the greatest despotism that has ever been conceived. I think with horror of this country; at any rate I have felt the slavery more than others. I shudder from head to foot when I think of Prussian despotism and of that scourge of the nations, whose country, cursed by nature herself and covered with Libyan sand, is infested with the scum of humanity and weighed down by a frozen curse."

22. Cf. Manuscript Memoirs of the Chancellor, Prince von Hardenberg. Edited by L. von Ranke, Leipzig, 1877, vol. ii. p. 218.

23. In "The Lessing Legend," Franz Mehring suggested that Icilius was not sufficiently esteemed by Frederick II. to justify him in making such recommendations as those of Lessing and Winckelmann, and Mehring gives instances, in which Icilius was very badly treated by Frederick. Goethe seems to give a more correct impression of Icilius' position as Frederick II.'s court-jester, who was often badly treated, but, on the other hand, "could also venture to take liberties." Goethe visited Icilius' widow at Berlin. Moreover, Mehring's doubt regarding Icilius was not shared by Winckelmann and Nicolai, or by Erich Schmidt and other official representatives of Prussian learning.

24. Cf. *Vier Briefe über Bismarcks sozial-politische und volkswirtschaftliche Stellung und Bedeutung*, by Professor Dr. Gustav Schmoller, of Berlin (Leipzig, 1899), p. 66.

25. P. 35 of the German edition, which was dedicated to the Prussian Crown Prince.

26. Thiebault always retained the good-will of Frederick II., but not that of certain Prussian historians, who, on account of his frank expressions, like to class him among the "authors of libellous literature." If Thiebault is quoted here (in the previous editions this passage was omitted), it is only because his evidence is confirmed by the Prince de Ligne, who is accepted as a witness even by Frederick's eulogists.

27. Preuss., *Urk.* iv. 224.

## FREDERICK II.'S MILITARY DEFEAT IN THE POTATO WAR

28. Max Lehmann: *Scharnhorst* (Leipzig, 1886), i. 37. Koser writes: "The deciding factor was that the Prussian artillery could not in the mountainous country follow up the marching columns with sufficient rapidity. . . . The King was forced to recognise that his scheme had, after huge efforts, been frustrated." The man who had frustrated it, Joseph II., must therefore be named the victor. "In the last days of September Prince Henry marched out of Bohemia; in the middle of October (1778) the King followed him, to the huge delight of the Austrians," continues Koser, and proceeds to describe Frederick II.'s measures "for securing the basis of operations for the next campaign." In regard to the cost to Prussia of the "Potato War," Koser writes (ii. 501): "The campaign of 1778 and the preparations for a second demanded 17 million (taler l)."

29. The otherwise very respectful memoirs of Dr. von Zimmermann regarding his professional visits to Frederick II., refer to the fact that the King was a very immoderate eater, and frequently made himself seriously ill in consequence. Cf. Zimmermann, *Frederick the Great*, etc., Leipzig, 1788. Further: "Indigestible, rich and strongly flavoured dishes were his favourite diet"; J. C. Freier, *Life and Character of Frederick II.* (Berlin, 1795), p. 75.

30. *Œuvres*, 4, 25.

31. Cf. K. Th. von Heigel: *Deutsche Geschichte von 1786 bis zur Französischen Revolution*.

32. Quoted from Max Lehmann: *Friedrich der Grosse und der Ursprung des Siebenjährigen Krieges* (Leipzig, 1894).



## THE PARTITION OF POLAND

33. In the middle of September 1772, Maria Theresa wrote to her son Ferdinand regarding the partition of Poland: "The danger of standing alone in a war against Russia and Prussia, and the misery, hunger and disease prevailing in my territories, induced me to enter into this fatal negotiation, which is a stain upon my whole government. It is the will of God that I should appear before him with a heavy weight of responsibility" (Guglia: *Maria Theresa*). In regard to the partition of Poland, the most irresponsible of Manfred's critics, G. B. Volz, in *Researches into the History of Prussia and Brandenburg*, vol. 39, pt. i. p. 157, wrote: "Joseph II. started the partition by the division and incorporation of Zips and other Hungarian frontier territory." Here again Volz is ill-informed; otherwise he would know that Frederick II., in his letter of January 14, 1771, boasted to his representative in Vienna, Rohde, that his *cordon* (which Prussian troops had previously drawn through Polish territory, ostensibly for fighting the plague) had incited the Austrians to their action in Zips. Further, it should be noted that Frederick favoured the Austrian seizure of Zips, because it set the ball rolling; further, that Austria had better claims to Zips than Prussia had to Silesia; further, that the Austrians were invited by the King of Poland to invade Zips; further, that Frederick II., on February 17, 1751, wrote to Rohde at Vienna in regard to Zips: "The little piece of Poland that Austria has taken is so small that the matter does not seem to me of much importance. It will perhaps be restored when peace is concluded"; further, that Catherine approved the occupation of Zips, because it seemed to her contrary to a partition of Poland of which she disapproved, until Frederick II. forced her into it by his intrigues between St. Petersburg and Vienna; further, that Maria Theresa declared herself ready to evacuate Zips, in order to prevent the partition of Poland; further, that Frederick, in connection with his successful efforts to bring about the partition, wrote on June 14, 1771, to his representative at St. Petersburg: "The whole matter only requires a little audacity and firmness, and I will vouch for its success, the more so as those who would like to oppose it—the Austrians—would have two powers against them and not a single ally. So we need have no fears regarding the plan of making conquests in Poland." Frederick II. had already in 1759 (!) offered the Russians portions of Poland. The Prussian historians have at length abandoned their previous plan of making Frederick II. a champion of German unification. They may with a good conscience accept in exchange the assurance that their great King was a champion of the partition of Poland.

34. Cf. Lehmann, *Friedrich der Grosse und der Ursprung des Siebenjährigen Krieges*, p. 95.

35. Preuss, iii. 68.

36. See K. v. Schlözer, *Frederick the Great and Catherine II.*, p. 73. The Prussian customs-house instituted by Frederick II. at Marienwerder, which Russia objected to, injured the Danzig trade by duties against Polish ships on the journey to and from the port of Danzig.

37. In response to Podewils' report of September 28, 1741, Frederick II. proposed to exchange a portion of Mecklenburg for East Frisia, "*laissant le reste du pays à ses ducs et au roi d'Angleterre.*"

38. i. 33 f.

39. iii. 43 f.
40. Cf. Sir James Harris (later Lord Malmesbury), *Diaries and Correspondence*, London, 1844. *Letters*, 1870.
41. 5, 2, 441 f.
42. *Geschichte der Koniglichen Seehandlung* (Berlin, 1911).
43. Trieste was from 1719-1891 a free port. During the Italian and Hungarian Revolution, Trieste remained loyal to Austria, and thenceforward bore the honourable title of *città fidelissima*. In the year 1888 a monument was erected there in honour of its having belonged to Austria for 500 years.
44. By a curious coincidence, soon after the World War a repetition of the Frederician scandals (although not on such a large scale) occurred at the Seehandlung. An ignorant Berlin comic paper at that time inserted a picture of "old Fritz" threatening the officials with his crooked stick, instead of praising them for reviving the Frederician tradition.
45. Preuss, iii. 22 f.
46. Preuss, iii. 24.
47. See Preuss, iii. 11-18.
48. Cf. Max Lehmann, *Freiherr vom Stein*.
49. Sibyllen Verlag, Dresden, 1924.
50. Cf. K. von Schlozer, *Friedrich und Katharina*, p. 186; also *Pol. Korrespondenz*, 1766, pp. 105, 118, 119, 132, 133, 165, 167, 353, 363.
51. I do not know what newspaper it was that I saw at this time. I inserted the name of the *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, because, in its review of my book, it upheld the thesis of the German character of the League of Princes.
52. Cf. O. Lorenz, *Goethes Politische Lehrjahre*, 1893.
53. For further details, see Preuss, i. p. 32 f. According to Preuss, Frederick William I. between 1713 and 1735 sent 12 million taler abroad for recruiting purposes. Less well known is the following condemnation pronounced by Frederick II. himself on the manner in which his grandfather, Frederick I., trafficked in soldiers in the contrary direction. Regarding this first King of Prussia Frederick II. remarked in one of his accessions of Voltairian candour: "He sold the blood of his subjects to the English and the Dutch, much as the nomad Tartars sell their herds to the Podolian butchers to be slaughtered." (Frederick II.'s works printed in his lifetime, i. p. 195.) See also Fr. Förster, *The Youth of Frederick the Great*, etc., Berlin, 1823, p. 7 f. and p. 46; J. C. Freier, *Life*, etc., Berlin, 1795, pp. 207 ff.
54. Cf. G. Arnhold, *Goethe's Berliner Beziehungen*, Gotha, 1925, p. 9.
55. Cf. Ranke, *Die Deutschen Mächte und der Fürstenbund*, Leipzig, 1875, p. 153.
56. The quotations from Koser given in the text refer to the third edition of the well-known work: *König Friedrich der Grosse*, Stuttgart, 1904 and 1905.
57. ii. 618-19.
58. ii. 602.
59. Cf. Zimmermann, *Fragmente*, 1790, iii. p. 129.
60. Koser, ii. 527.

61. ii. 606.

62. ii. 611.

63. ii. 521, 610.

64. Cf. Ranke, *Die Deutschen Mächte*, etc., p. 159.

65. Lehmann, *Friedrich der Grosse und der Ursprung des Siebenjährigen Krieges*, 71.

66. *Pol. Corr.* ii. 106.

67. *Pol. Corr.* i. 90 f.

68. Koser, i. p. 426.

69. Ranke, *Die Deutschen Mächte*, p. 143. In regard to the important fact of the exhaustion of England, who at this decisive moment for Belgium and Germany, was able to make use of Frederick II. against Germany, see also Felix Salomon, "England and the German League of Princes," *Historische Zeitschrift*, 1901, pp. 221 and 231. At the beginning of May, 1784, the King of England wrote to his son, the Duke of York: "England is not in a position to wage war, but in my capacity of Elector, I should consider myself greatly to blame if I were not prepared to take a part in the defence of the constitution of the Empire." After the English cabinet meeting of May 15, 1785, Carmarthen wrote to the English ambassador, Ewart, in Berlin, a letter, which contains the following sentence: "Interested as Great Britain and Prussia must be to watch every motion of their respective rivals, now so closely and so formidably connected. . . ."

70. These words are taken from the draft of the Prussian Treaty; see Pruss., iv. 165 f.

71. Koser, ii. 619.

72. von Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, i. 52.

73. *Die Deutschen Mächte*, p. 185.

74. Pruss., iii. 49.

75. iii. 242 f.

76. Frederick's Academy has established a tradition. Exactly the same evidence of the necessity for circulating trashy literature and untruths is being produced to-day by low-class publishing houses, the yellow press, films, and those intellectual guides, who still like to base themselves on Frederick II.

77. This quotation is derived from the Breslau rector, S. B. Klose, who was intimate with Lessing from 1760-1765. See Lessing's conversations, published by F. von Biedermann, Berlin, 1925.

78. Goethe to Merck, 5, viii. 1778.

79. i. 525.

80. Pruss., *Urk.* ii. 233.

81. Cf. Broglie, *Frederick the Great and Maria Theresa*.

82. ii. 529.

83. Some critics of the book have especially objected to this passage. It may be mentioned that Erich Mareks (in *Prince Bismarck and the House of Hohenzollern*) said practically the same thing: "That which Bismarck regarded as of the greatest personal value and which was most characteristic of him, was lacking in his royal predecessor (Frederick II.): the

spiritual connection with land and house, with his nation and with his God."

84. *Œuvres viv.* i. 274.

85. Cf. correspondence of the "Grosse Landgräfin." Vienna, 1877.

86. These words are recorded by Count Lehndorff, and are quoted by H. F. Helmolt in his *Friedrich der Grosse* (1926, p. 54).

87. Wilhelm von Humboldt's Diaries, which are full of interesting records by this much-travelled and cultured man. Humboldt tried to fight against Berlin reaction, and fell into disgrace in 1819. Up to 1830 this great statesman was deprived of any part in the political life of Prussia.

88. I Cor. ix. 5.

89. This lamentation of Frederick's admirers is repeated, for example, by Johannes Richter in his edition of the letters of Frederick to Fredersdorf (Berlin, 1926), p. 190.

90. Eleven million for the building itself and an equal amount for the internal decoration. Cf. the figures in the text with this statement taken from Preuss (ii. p. 387). On September 8, 1758 (de Catt's "Diaries"), Frederick said that he had—at that time already, i.e. before the construction of the New Palace—expended two million on Sans-Souci. "*J'y ai dépensé deux millions et en y mettant un million encore il n'y aurait plus rien à ajouter.*" In consequence of the triumphs of the following war years, Frederick then believed himself justified in a much larger expenditure on the New Palace.

91. See Koser, i. 524.

92. Manger, in his *Architectural History of Potsdam* (iii. p. 774), declares that the order to burn the accounts for the buildings at Potsdam was not carried out. Frederick's financial policy was difficult to understand. As far as I know, the cost of the expensive internal decorations cannot be ascertained.

93. Manfred's information regarding Frederick's gold-making cannot be communicated. He allowed me, "in strict confidence," to glance into a whole notebook filled with amazing details. I therefore replace here Manfred's missing quotations by quotations from the new edition of the letters of Frederick to Fredersdorf, published in 1926 and compiled by Johannes Richter, who on p. 230 calls Frederick's gold-making "a great moral act," and makes the other highflown statements quoted in the text.

94. Cf. Bielschowsky, *passim*.

95. The words of Carlyle quoted here are taken from his *Reminiscences*.

96. Quoted from Ottokar Lorenz in *Goethe's Politische Lehrjahre*.

97. "In a similar connection Goethe described all written history as one huge euphemism." Cf. Goethe to Rochlitz, 1829, in Goethe's conversations (Biedermann, Leipzig, 1910), iv. 131. Goethe said much the same thing to Riemer on June 2, 1811: "that the bulk of history was nothing more than gossip"; and in July 1817 (Biedermann, ii. 396): "Patriotism spoils history."

98. Vol. ii. 372 f.

99. ii. 387 and I. 273.

100. iii. 367.

101. Lessing to Gleim, February 1, 1767.

102. General von Zühl wrote to the same effect regarding the Austrians

103. Seydlitz was very much of Goethe's opinion ; also Napoleon ; cf. the conversation published separately : *Napoleon, or Prostration before the Hero*.

104. Cf. de Catt.

105. Cf. Koser, ii. 216.

106. ii. 374.

107. Berlin, 1789, i. 248.

108. ii. 120.

109. Cf. Th. Schicmann, *Die Noten der Kaiserin Katharina II. zu Denina : Essai*, etc. in *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen Geschichte*, xv. 2, p. 223 ff.

110. Preuss (i. p. 365) : " This libeller (Voltaire) in the most offensive manner refers to the King merely as *Luc*, thereby intending, by a transposition of the letters, to hint at the slander of which he had already been guilty in the *Vie privée* and the *Pucelle*."

111. Cf. de Catt's " Diaries." J. C. Freiers' *Leben und Charakter Friedrichs des Grossen* (Berlin, 1795), tries (pp. 8 ff.) " to explain Frederick's ignorance of the first elements of knowledge."

112. Cf. p. 365.

113. Preuss, ii. 97.

114. This was merely by way of notifying Prussian claims to the Orange inheritance.

115. *Œuvres*, xxiv. 3.

116. K. von Schlözer, *Friedrich der Grosse und Katharina*, Berlin, 1859, p. 107.

117. Cf. Koser, i. p. viii.

118. Koser, i. 231.

119. The high figure given here by Manfred is also given by Norwood Young, who cites as his authority von der Goltz (*Von Rossbach bis Jena*).

120. Cf. *Die Geschichtswissenschaft der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen*, vol. i, p. 222, Leipzig, Felix Meiner Verlag, 1925.

121. P. 23 f.

122. Cf. Hans Delbrück, *Leben des Feldmarschalls Grafen N. v. Gneisenau*, p. 136.

123. *Urk.* iii. 20.

124. Preuss, iii. 206 ff.

125. *Œuvres*, ix. 183.

#### PRUSSIA'S CRIME AGAINST GERMAN COLONISATION IN THE EAST

126. Cf. Koser, ii. 607 : " Catherine asked her ally (Joseph II.) how much Turkish territory he wanted." As a result of Frederick II.'s intrigues, which were continued by his successor, Germany came empty-handed out of the Balkans. Bismarck quotes General Gerlach's remark : " Anything more wretched than the policy of Prussia from 1778 up to the French Revolution has never been known, etc., etc." and : " I cannot help thinking that this veto (against the oriental policy of Germany's eastern neighbours)

was an act of barren self-assertion in the style of French prestige. . . . Had I been a Minister of Frederick William II., my advice would rather have been to support the ambition of Austria and Russia in an eastward direction . . . ." (*Reflections and Reminiscences*, chapter 12.) On November 28, 1790, Prince Kaunitz had to write to L. Coblenz: "The salvation of the Austrian monarchy depends on her being allowed the necessary interval of peace in which to recover and secure her possessions in the Netherlands, to safeguard the royal prestige in Hungary, and to restore her troops and finances; it depends also on her not being exposed to the united attacks of the Porte, Prussia and the sea-powers at a time when she lacks the requisite means of resistance." Alfred von Vivenot, *Die Politik des Fürsten Kaunitz-Rietberg unter Kaiser Leopold*, Vienna, 1873, p. 45.

127. Cf. Koser, ii. 125.

128. In 1740 Frederick II. had pretended to the princes who were loyal to Germany that he would "defend the imperial house at the first sign of its weakness."

129. Vol. ii. 2, p. 1 ff.

130. Cf. Frederick's letters to Siehm and v. Seckendorf when he was Crown Prince.

131. Delbrück says the same thing in *Regierung und Volkswille* (Berlin, 1914), p. 45.

132. Under this title Herr von Goetz has recently reissued the conversation (Pub. Georg Stilke). Helmolt and others have also recently republished it. Consequently Manfred's remarks on the conversation, which were previously omitted, may be inserted here.

133. Cf. *Œuv. posth.* v. 159.

134. iii. 227-9.

135. *Œuv. posth.* v. 119 and ix. 221.

136. Further details regarding the memorable dispute between these two Berlin scholars are to be found in the book published in 1911: *Der Städtebau nach den Ergebnissen der Städtebau-Ausstellung*, etc., by W. Hegemann, p. 71 ff.

137. ii. 387.

138. ii. 376.

139. *Œuv. posth.* v. 130.

140. iii. 3, 442.

141. Cf. F. Nicolai's emendations of some already printed anecdotes in the second part of his *Anekdoten von Friedrich II.* (Berlin, 1789), p. 214.

142. Pierre de Nolhac, member of the Academy, is a very trustworthy authority on all the questions touching Versailles. The quotation given in the text is taken from his book, *Louis XV. et Madame de Pompadour*.

143. Cf. J. J. Olivier et Wilby Norbert, *La Barberina Campanini* (Paris, 1910), p. 49.

144. In the foolish rebuilding of the Opera House, by which, in contradiction to the advice of all the experts, Knobelsdorff's magnificent structure was permanently disfigured at an expenditure of about ten million marks, an axial relation to the old library opposite was contemplated. Cf. the proposals of W. Hegemann and L. Adler published in the monthly journal, *Städtebau*, pt. 6, 1926, and *Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst*, pt. 8, 1926.

145. Report of General Bouillé, quoted by Carlyle.
146. Guglia, *Maria Theresia*. On the other hand, the Prussian Minister of State, Schlabrendorff: "One is a veritable slave," quoted by Max Lehmann (*Friedrich der Grosse und der Ursprung des Siebenjährigen Kriegs*, p. 24).
147. Preuss, iii. 359 f.
148. Preuss, iii. 362.
149. Preuss, iii. 365.
150. Ranke, *Die Deutschen Mächte*, 2nd edn., p. 85.
151. Preuss, iv. 334.
152. Cf. Guglia, *Maria Theresia*.
153. iii. 187, 239.
154. Preuss, iii. 429.
155. Goethe to Eckermann, 27, iii. 1825.
156. *Œuvres*, *Table Chronologique*, p. 154.
157. The German from which this text was translated, and the last sentence of which is incorrect (see the French original, page 213), was selected, because it is included in specially large type and as a sort of motto in the popular work: *Friedrich der Grosse—Potsdam*, by Prof. Dr. Hans Kania, 1923. It is not placed there with the intention of mocking at the great King. On the contrary, it is accompanied by a picture of the King's flute and the words: "Frederick's compositions consist of four concertos and 121 sonatas for the flute," and "I am a dilettante in every respect," Frederick to Voltaire, May 1st, 1760.
158. This statement was made (1926) by Major Max Wild in his essay: "*Friedrich der Grosse und Trenck*" (*Literarische Rundschau* of the daily *Tägliche Rundschau*). When I inquired as to his source, he referred me to the documents in the Secret State Archives, Berlin-Dahlem.
159. Preuss, iii. 326.
160. Preuss, i. 222 f.
161. *Acta Borussica*, viii. 620.
162. xiv. 334.
163. iii. 236.
164. ix. 151.
165. iv. 293, 298.
166. Preuss, i. 383; iii. 147.
167. The quotation given in the text is taken from "*Auserlesene Gespräche im Reiche derer Todten zwischen dem Königl. Preussischen General-Lieutenant von der Cavallerie von der Schulenburg, und dem Königl. Ungarisch-und Böhmischen General Römer, den gegenwärtigen Krieg in Schlesien, Böhmen und Oesterreich betreffend*." Braunschweig und Leipzig, 1743."
168. Cf. J. G. Droysen, *Geschichte der Preussischen Politik*, iii. 3, 458.
169. *Œuvres*, ix. 145.
170. v. 442.
171. *Frederick II. and Maria Theresa*, 1740-2.
172. This confidential information may be mentioned here, because Dumaine has since written to the same effect in his book: *Choses d'Allemagne*

(Paris, 1926). The words of the French ambassador regarding William II. in 1926 correspond almost word for word with what the English ambassador, Harris (Malmesbury) wrote in 1776 regarding Frederick II.: "I never heard of any man so endowed with the gift of persuasion as his Prussian Majesty, nor of anyone who knows how to employ it so opportunely. . . . Not one of them (the Russian visitors) will return to St. Petersburg without being infatuated with his affability and goodness."

173. Cf. Hegemann: *Der Städtebau nach den Ergebnissen der Allgemeinen Städtebau-Ausstellung* (Berlin, 1913) ; chapter on Paris.

174. Cf. *Erinnerungen und Aufsätze*, 2nd edn., Berlin, 1902.

175. *Deutsche Rundschau*, February, 1895.

176. *Ges. Werke*, viii. 210.





## NOTES TO THE ILLUSTRATIONS

As is clear from Frederick II.'s letters of November 1, 1772, and May 17, 1775, he did not regard himself as handsome, never allowed himself to be painted, and declared all the fancy portraits executed by all kinds of painters to be unlike him. Lavater, who has much to say regarding the royal characteristics of the physiognomy of Frederick II., expresses the following opinion on the pictures known to us: "Frederick II. is not handsome in the manner in which he is idealised by painters ignorant of physiognomy, he is not great in this manner, and he is certainly not handsome." It is noteworthy in regard to the face that the eyes were not large, as they have been depicted in idealised portraits, but "of medium size" (Preuss., i. 419), and that the forehead is markedly receding.

In order to get an accurate idea of the appearance of Frederick II., one must study the death-mask, in respect to which it should be noted that the much-circulated and much-admired death-mask of Frederick II. is itself a "touching up"—that is to say, an idealisation and falsification—of the genuine death-mask.

*Facing pp. 150 and 300 :*

Two reproductions of the genuine death-mask of Frederick II., as published by Professor G. B. Volz in his book, *Friedrich der Grosse im Bilde seiner Zeit*, published by K. F. Koehler, Berlin and Leipzig, 1926. Professor Volz quotes in this connection the remarks of the anatomist, Waldeyer, who writes regarding the formation of the skull of Frederick II.: "The forehead is narrow and receding, as it appears in all good portraits of the King."

*Frontispiece :*

Portrait of Frederick II. on horseback from the year 1778 (beginning of the "Potato War") from an etching by Chodowiecki. This picture is not without documentary value, for it is perhaps not so much an attempt at idealisation, as in some sense a realistic reproduction of the impression made upon the great artist by the King when the latter was taking a ride.

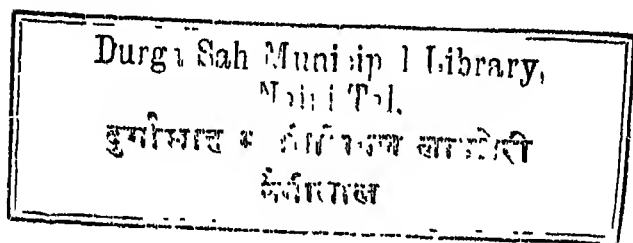
### RUNNING THE GAUNTLET. FROM AN ETCHING BY CHODOWIECKI

*Facing p. 452 :*

This picture is taken from the illustration in J. B. Basedow's *Elementarwerke für die Jugend und ihre Freunde*, Berlin and Dessau, 1774. In the explanatory text published in 1782, this picture is described as follows:

"At that time terrible punishments were inflicted. Some hundred soldiers, at the command of the cavalry officer, received from the provost rods, with which to lash the naked back of one of their comrades. The latter had merely left the guardhouse without leave, in order to drink a pot

of ale at the tavern at a time when he was not posted on guard anywhere. A small irregularity of this kind, if it is allowed to go unpunished, leads to a greater. This is realised by both non-commissioned and senior officer, by the corporal and the general. The soldiers stand in two straight lines, between which the culprit must proceed slowly, for in front and behind there is a non-commissioned officer with a sword to regulate the rate of his progress. The drummer beats on the muffled drum, thus producing a subdued and melancholy sound. The fugleman holds his gun at his left foot. Each of the common soldiers has a broadsword at the side, a cartridge belt slung round him, and a long pigtail down his back, he wears a hat, and his legs are clad in gaiters, which are like boots, but are buttoned up. Above at the pillory is a man or woman, with hands bound, so that he or she can only touch the ground with the toes. The bailiff stands behind him or her and strikes his or her back with rods. The assistant hands him fresh rods, as soon as they are worn out. There is also a neck-iron, which is fastened round the neck of a criminal, who must then stand at the pillory for some hours and provide sport for malicious spectators."



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